Week ending July 28 1951 Every Wednesday Fourpence

John Bull

4 TULK TERR

Danger in the home

HOW A DOCTOR AND HIS WIFE ARE FIGHTING IT

by NORMAN PHILLIPS

". . . silence, rich with comprehension"

THERE ARE PEOPLE with whom you can pass happy hours in a mutual silence, rich with comprehension. Why? Because you feel at one with them. Others who come upon you thus are only interrupting. So with Craven 'A' cigarettes and those who smoke them. Anything you say will only be ignored, because nothing you can say will seem of the least importance, compared with the solace of that rich tobacco, so kind to the throat, and the firm feel of that natural cork tip, so kind to the lips. *There's* comfort for you. So take one yourself and relax.

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EDITORIAL

Grumble though they may, people go on saving

IT SEEMED LIKELY that the National Savings Movement would be one of the first casualties from the rise in the cost of living.

For many people are saying: "I can't make ends meet, let alone save anything. What's the use of asking me to buy bonds and certificates and put money into the Post Office? It was all very well to save in the war, when prices were lower and there was nothing to buy. But now. . . ."

Yet the facts contradict the grumbling. During the spring and early summer of this year, while inflation gained ground daily, savings actually increased.

Not only the total but the rate of savings improved over last year. The average weekly amount rose to about £20,000,000, including accrued interest.

In their various ways National savers now hold over £6,000,000,000 —and two-thirds of this comes not from people with substantial sums to salt away, but from the continuous savings of industrial workers.

A lot of the new impetus which has helped savings to grow this year in spite of higher living costs is due to the appeal of the new certificate and bond issues which started last February. There's a moral for those in charge of our national finances.

Of course no one claims that savings are on a wartime scale or that withdrawals do not tend to match up to deposits. But £20,000,000 a week, or nearly a pound per head of the working population, is not bad going in these hard times.

THIS month and next the figures must be expected to drop again. There is a rhythm in saving. Holidays mean withdrawals, because a lot of the money was put by precisely for that purpose.

So every year in July and August there is a "run on the bank." It puts itself right in the autumn. People come back from the holidays and set to work to build up a reserve again.

These seasonal changes do not worry the National Savings organizers. They make their plans accordingly—and this year there are plans for a new campaign after the holiday season to make sure that the autumn boom is a big one which will help the nation.

What *does* worry the savings people more is the awkward question, heard nowadays wherever ordinary people are discussing their money problems: "As the value of the pound is dropping, what's the point of saving now—because my money will be worth less later on when I want to spend it?"

There are several answers to that. One is that there is no need whatever to take such a gloomy view of our national prospects, especially as rearmament won't go on for ever.

Another practical answer is that even if the pound does sag a little more, interest rates on the new savings securities are good enough to take up a good deal of the slack.

But the main answer is partly practical and partly an appeal to patriotic good sense. It is this—that the more money is saved, the less inflation we shall have. Which means —the *less* the value of the pound will fall.

MOST of the effort to persuade people to save is directed to this end, and not to raising a sort of gigantic floating loan out of the people's pockets.

What you save you don't spend, and what you don't spend doesn't help to send up the prices of goods which are being made scarcer by the demands of the defence programme. Those are the elementary economics of saving at this moment; and just as it is true of the nation, so it is true of the family budget.

The wise families are finding that hard times, far from ruling out savings, lead to them naturally. If you want to buy something big, or pay essential bills, you have to save up for it.

So it is the job of the National Savings organizers to make sure that people take the trouble to do that saving in an organized way—and put the money, while it accumulates, where it cannot burn holes in pockets.

The organizers have so far gone about their task pretty efficiently. There are now over 150,000 savings groups, besides nearly 19,000 in the Armed Forces, and the number has risen this year.

This autumn's campaign will see a renewal of Savings Weeks in towns and villages throughout Britain, and London will have its own week in October.

But all these propaganda efforts are only reminders, boosts to the memory and conscience of the average citizen. The really hopeful sign is not the efficiency, however welcome, of our savings organizers, but the proven fact that ordinary people everywhere act more wisely than they often talk!

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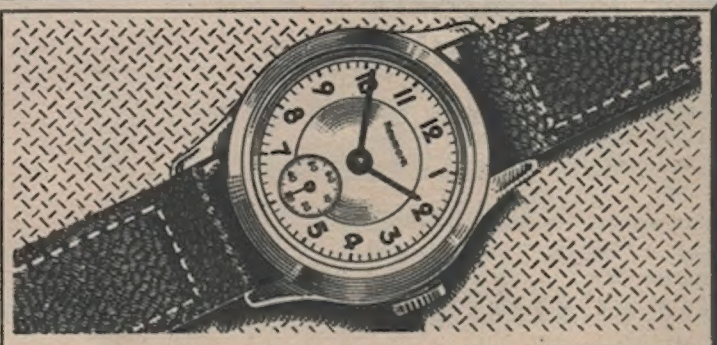

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July 28, 1951 VOL. 90 No. 2352 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON

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FREE SPEECH

Why so many "lost" children on the beach?

IT IS DISGRACEFUL that so many children should get "lost" at seaside resorts. Last Sunday, I took a small boy to the Lost Children's Hut at Moreton, and there were eight little mites there sobbing their hearts out.

Later, on the beach, one woman told me she had lost her little girl of twelve months. Fancy losing a child so small! People should be fined for such wicked carelessness.—MRS. S. F. ELCOCK, 143 Highfield Road, Rock Ferry, Cheshire.

Le Touquet, 1945

HERE IS A snapshot I took of Le Touquet when there early in 1945. The skull and crossbones sign (foreground), indicating a mined area, appeared in practically every street, and even the furniture in bungalows had booby traps. Louis Wiel, the twenty-seven year old Frenchman who has striven to transform Le Touquet into "Britain's holiday suburb" (JOHN BULL article, June 30), certainly had to clear up a mess.—G. H. WARREN, Main Street, Farmfield, Newark, Notts.

Value For Higher Fares

MY WIFE AND I always travel by rail with the baby because we can then take the perambulator. But dilapidated stations and grubby carriages disgust us more with each trip. Our reaction to the JOHN BULL Editorial, "People Will Want Better Value For Higher Rail Fares," is that we would pay more if this meant travelling past bright-looking stations in a train with clean windows and upholstery. As things are, we will soon take to carrying baby to the bus.—THOMAS GLASS, 16 Bute Street, Weaste, Salford, Lancs.

Small Talk

WHILE travelling on a bus, I was thrilled to hear a little child chattering all the time. He asked so many questions that his mother rebuked him and said to me: "I am ashamed of him, the way he babbles on, annoying people." I answered: "Well, he doesn't annoy me." I love to hear kiddies asking questions. It shows that they are intelligent, and they should be encouraged to learn all they can.—MRS. R. JONES, 12 Higher Lane, Fazakerley, Liverpool.

Gilbert And Sullivan

COMMENTS ABOUT "TRADITION" in Norman Phillips's JOHN BULL article, "The Singing Heirs of Gilbert and Sullivan," prompt me to say this: as one who has seen and heard all the Gilbert and Sullivan light operas since the mid-eighties, I consider that some of the new "business" introduced does not accord with tradition and does not improve the operas, rather the reverse. For instance, the article tells us that the word "Knightsbridge" in *The Mikado* is usually altered to secure a local laugh. This opera does not even *look* the same as it did. Gone are the bright, wallpaper-coloured dresses, and the Mikado himself has lost his old imposing crown. I wonder if this change had anything to do with the banning of *The Mikado* during a visit to Britain of the Japanese Crown Prince in 1921.—CHARLES D. KINNIS, 17 Alliance Avenue, Belfast.

World Contest Ahead?

IMITATION, it is said, is the sincerest form of flattery. The women of Holbaek, here in Denmark, have copied their English sisters in Olney, Bucks, with a Pancake Derby, which they are

Trial toss before the Holbaek race

going to repeat each year. Eighty women were starters, and the prize was a kiss from the local stationmaster—ELSIE ANDERSSON, Vangedevej 17a, Gentofte, Denmark.

A cover impression by A. R. Thomson, R.A., of the Olney event appeared in JOHN BULL *in February. The U.S. township of Liberal, Kansas, held a Pancake Derby on the same day as Olney. Olney's winning time was ahead of the American.*

Shoulders Back, Tummy In

MY JOB AS A physical training instructor makes me agree with your correspondent who criticizes the bad stance of present-day teenagers ("Free Speech," June 30). Exercises for posture are given as part of every P.T. lesson and some children achieve good stance during those lessons but forget about it immediately afterwards. Lessons in simple physiology, to link up with P.T., might be a solution, but, as a general rule, they have, as yet, no place in the curriculum.—TEACHER, London.

. . . The critic of teenagers' bad stance need not have visited Capri to see a woman carrying a bucket on her head. We lived in the South of Ireland and my mother always carried her bucket of water on her head. It was the custom to make a ring of dried grass to fit the top of one's head; the bucket was placed on the ring. My mother walked beautifully and always had a straight back.—MRS. K. SHARMAN, 57 Mayles Road, Milton, Portsmouth.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

DOUGLAS L. MAYS, the artist, says: "Along the Kent coast where beaches are pebbly, people often walk about on back-stays—small planks strapped to the feet. The children can play at explorers trekking to the North Pole on snowshoes."

Officer—Ex-Glasshouse

JAMES STEARN'S DESCRIPTION of life in a glasshouse (JOHN BULL, July 7) prompts me to write in defence of the Army's methods. I can personally vouch for the fact that the Army does not hound men who have been in a glasshouse. I am one of the many who have risen to commissioned rank after being in the glasshouse twice. I am sure there are many men in this country who thank the Army for teaching them how to achieve self-discipline.—LIEUTENANT, Yorkshire.

. . . A disused cotton mill was where I served my wartime "stretch." Beds without mattresses gave us "draught-board" backs. I came out with a real grudge against the Army.—E. R., Ayrshire.

Agility On Two Wheels

THE AVERAGE PERSON aged between fourteen and eighteen can ride a bicycle just as well and has as much road sense as the average older person. It is just that older people dislike being shown up by the agility of the under-eighteens. That is my answer to the reader who, in "Free Speech," urged tests for cyclists under eighteen.—B. A. YOUNG, 142 Fletching Road, London, E.5.

The Conker Grows

I WAS interested in Mrs. W. Emmett's letter ("Free Speech," July 7) about the tree her family has grown from an acorn. Six years ago, when I was ten, I planted a conker in my grandmother's garden. Here is a photograph of the resultant small but flourishing tree, in which I take great pride.—JOHN MORTON, School House, Brigg, Lincs.

Penny On The Ball

AT THE END of each Test Match, there is an undignified scramble by the players for balls and stumps as souvenirs. Why not give the spectators a chance on the lines of "a penny on the ball" at soccer matches? It would raise large sums for cricketers' benevolent funds.—FRED SHAW, 3 Prospect Road, Oldham, Lancs.

Washing Before Meals

SPENDING A WEEKEND with a discussion group, I was amazed to note that not more than half a dozen out of nearly 100 people washed their hands immediately before meals were served. And these were people who would have been appalled if they had thought their food was not being prepared hygienically.—J. MARTIN, Huddersfield.

Postmen's Trail

ON MY TWENTY-MINUTE WALK to business each morning, I usually pick up one or more lengths of new string (about four feet long) discarded by postmen delivering the first mail. If these were slipped back into the postmen's bags and used over and over again, the saving would be colossal.—E. J. AXON, 18 Downman Road, London, S.E.9.

Letters intended for publication should be marked "Free Speech" and include the sender's full name and address. John Bull pays a guinea for every letter printed. Readers with personal problems should send inquiries (other than medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service with a stamped, addressed envelope for reply.

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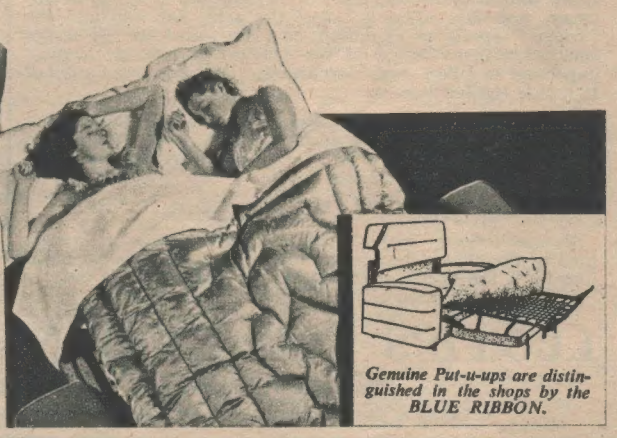

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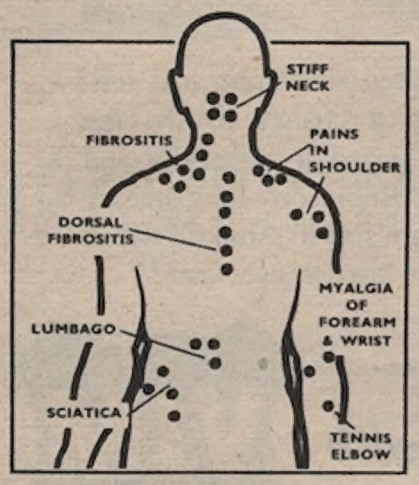

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Its secret is to apply a revolutionary new massage cream, not only where you feel the pain, but also on what Doctors call the myalgic or "trigger" spots, which are often some distance away. These diagrams show why you have found relief so difficult by the old methods.

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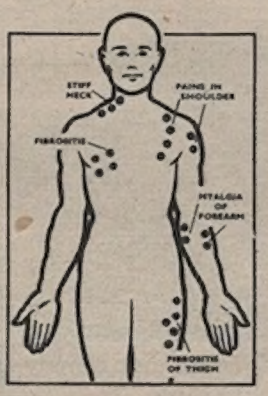

The genuine Lloyd's Adrenaline Cream can be obtained from any good chemist including all branches of Boots, Taylors and Timothy Whites at 5/- a jar. Get some today and prove for yourself how rapidly it brings relief.

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Witchdoctor Maticket Sabela (right). Native clients call him *Sangoma*—the "smeller out" of evil spirits. In his hand is the dreaded fly-switch

The Witchdoctor casts his spell

by ALASTAIR SCOBIE

With his box of magic bones, Maticket Sabela is not a figure to scoff at. For, as Alastair Scobie reveals in another vivid article about *Amazing Africa*, the power of the witchdoctor is reviving

THE BIG POLICE SERGEANT IN his smart khaki uniform crosses the courtyard of the little jail to the line of steel-doored cells. A rattle of keys and he swings open a door. Cross-legged on the floor the prisoner sits, wearing the scarlet jersey and drab trousers of the South African jails. "Come on," says the sergeant, "you're out today."

He is not a hard man, and African prisoners have often had a smile or a cheery word from him at the end of a sentence, but the sergeant has no kindness to waste on his present charge. The prisoner, slim, broad-shouldered, gets nervously to his feet and edges into the hot sunshine, blinking his strange, myopic eyes at the light. His bare feet shuffle across the dusty courtyard to the jail office, where he leaves his fingerprint on a piece of official paper in exchange for a small, pitiful bundle. Five minutes later he is free, dressed in his only clothes, a ragged and greasy pair of duck trousers.

Once clear of the jail gates, he sets off down the road beside the dazzling white cliffs of the mine dumps surrounding Johannesburg. He walks easily, like a cat, on his bare feet. To the casual observer he is simply another native prisoner released from the lock-up—more ragged than most, but common enough, except for his great mass of hair.

The South African police sergeant knows better. Watching his prisoner retreat towards the township where he lives, the sergeant knows he has released a man of great power over his people—Maticket Sabela, the Zulu witchdoctor.

Maticket goes home to his room in a court in the Alexandra Township, outside Johannesburg. His home is simply a square room with mud brick walls, one of several such rooms built in a line. Outside is a mound of forgotten building rubble, old tin cans and the bones of a donkey that died there weeks before. Dust blows down the sandy streets from the mine dumps into the room, and the room itself is much less pleasant than the jail cell he has just left.

There is a bed and a pile of cooking pots, and the split and battered tin box in which Maticket keeps his magical equipment, his bones and bits of snake's skin, calabashes of paste and tiny bottles of oils and grease. It is a hovel, but Maticket is glad to be home, and greets the friends and neighbours who come to congratulate him on his release with cheerful cries of delight.

He combs out his hair until long, black ringlets fall to his shoulders, then decorates it with safety-pins and old curtain rings. From his box he takes a pot of rancid lion fat and smears his whole body. He will never wash this off unless another spell in jail forces him to do so. Round his neck he hangs the leather collar of his profession, strings of magic beads, each with a particular

Dry-cleaning shop among the dusty shanties of Alexandra Township where Maticket lives

significance to him. On his arms he fits his bracelets. Then he picks up his bead-studded fly switch of fine horsehair, and goes out into the sunlight, where he squats down, awaiting clients.

An hour passes, then up comes Mrs. Samtola. She greets him nervously, sits down beside him and begins to speak. The white people for whom she works as a nursemaid believe she is a Christian—and so she is. Every Sunday she attends the African Free Church in the township, and no one sings the hymns and shouts the hallelujahs more loudly than she does. When her baby was sick she rushed him to a European doctor—no native medicine men for Mrs. Samtola (indeed, Maticket Sabela's own arm shows a vaccination mark). Mrs. Samtola is a good Christian—until it comes to witchcraft.

"Sangoma," she says to Maticket, "something very bad has happened. My sister lives in Zululand still, but often she writes and begs me to let her join me here. Last year I sent her money to come, but she fell ill. This year I sent her money again, and she was coming, but she broke her leg. She thinks her relatives hate her—my brother-in-law is a bad man and wishes to marry her as well as my other sister. My sister thinks he has got a wicked witchman to make a spell so that she cannot cross water, for was it not by a stream she was taken ill? And did she not break her leg on a bridge?"

Faith For Ten Shillings

Mrs. Samtola presses a ten-shilling note in Maticket's hand, and he sits staring moodily at the wall for a moment. When he answers it is not in any "trance-voice" or sepulchral muttering, but in a cheery, matter-of-fact way as though witchcraft was something as normal as the weather. "Write to your sister and say that I will protect her. She need not fear. She will come when her leg is better, and nothing bad will happen." Gratefully, Mrs. Samtola goes off.

Maticket Sabela has taken ten shillings from a foolish woman for promising to perform a service which he is obviously incapable of carrying out. That is one way to look at it. But there is another side to the medal. For ten shillings, Maticket Sabela has given both Mrs. Samtola and her sister a certain faith. The sister can come to Johannesburg. She will not die or break a leg, fall ill or meet any other disaster. For Maticket has the name of being a powerful witchman, and he is, in the eyes of Mrs. Samtola, if not of the authorities, a good man. Good will always triumph over evil, so for ten shillings, Maticket has made it possible for two women to be united who would never have dared to go against evil things.

Is Maticket a fraud? Is he a crook? Can he really perform feats of magic? Maticket Sabela is nervous of white men and unwilling to talk much about his profession, yet there are certain facts that can be checked; by taking known cases of bewitchment into account, a fairly reasonable assessment of Maticket's powers can be made. Maticket is simply a witchdoctor. But he does not cure disease.

He is a "Sangoma"—a "smeller-out"—and his only job is to discover and defeat the evil forces of "witches," which can be male or female, living or dead, in the form of people, trees or animals. Maticket believes the world to be peopled with spirits, forces and the influence of the dead. Everything has a soul—a man, a tree, or a brick wall. Evil spirits can use a person or a thing, not evil in itself, to work evil. And Maticket's job is to defeat evil. Or so he says.

The police openly admit detestation of Maticket and all his kind. All over South Africa and the British Protectorates of Basutoland, Swaziland and Bechuanaland there has been a sharp revival of ritual murder of recent years. For a time, witchcraft and the power of the witchman had seemed to be waning. Young, university-trained chiefs were taking power. The magical societies that practise ritual murder were dying, broken up by new knowledge and faiths coming in from the white man's world.

Now the true situation is revealed. In all these territories, as in East Africa, murder for witchcraft is becoming almost common. Young girls are killed for their blood to placate evil spirits; "witches"—persons suspected of witchcraft—are killed as callously as ever they were burned in England in the sixteenth century.

Sign That Meant Death

Sabela protests his innocence of all this. "I am not a bad man," he insists. "I am a good man. I work good, not evil. I would not kill innocent people." Yet, fifty years ago, Sabela's job among his own tribe would have been simply to deal out death. That innocent, bead-studded fly switch he always has in his hands was once a more terrible weapon in his native Zululand than any of the spears of the mighty Zulu regiments. Even among the warriors, a witchman had only to point that dreaded switch and call that the man was a witch and he would be murdered instantly and without compassion.

Perhaps the most pitiful thing about these ritual murderers, carrying on their horrible work today in the twentieth century, is that most of them believe they are doing good to their people. They kill because they believe that, without the purification of their people from the influence of witches and wizards, no rain will fall, the crops will die, the hand of the white man will fall heavily on them, and general ruin and disaster will face them.

It is possibly the break-up of tribal life, due to the young men seeking paid employment in the towns, that has made the witchdoctor even stronger now than he was a few years ago. "Get back to the old ways," say the wise men of the tribes, "and it shall be as it was before the whites came."

Almost every African believes—though he may not admit it immediately—that a witchdoctor can kill at a distance by use of evil spirits. Much of this "long-distance murder" is actually done with poison. Poison is the chief tool of the witchdoctors, and every African taken ill has a suspicion he has been poisoned. But the fact of killing at a distance is too frequent to be easily explained away.

The doctors who administer to the hundreds of thousands of "boys" employed in digging the gold from Johannesburg's vast reef see too much of this phenomenon to doubt its efficacy. A native is brought into hospital. He is unaccountably ill, yet there appears to be nothing the matter with him that a white doctor can cure. "I am bewitched, master. I must die." Every doctor in such practice has heard the phrase, and most have stories of their patients actually dying for no good reason.

There is, of course, an explanation. It is something like the old practical joke played out in many a British factory or office. Bill Jones comes to work, looking as fit as a fiddle until one of his mates says: "Bill, old man, you look pale. Are you all right?"

"Of course I'm all right," says Bill. Then he meets another man who says: "I'd lie down if I were you, Bill. You look rotten." Bill now snaps that he is as fit as ever—but should Bill possess a strong imagination, and his mates be good actors, the betting is that Bill will soon ask to go home. This kind of suggestion can make even an Englishman believe that he is unwell.

A Witchman Was Fooled

So that when a raw African native from the bush hears some dreaded witchdoctor has cursed him he *knows* he is going to die. His faith is implicit—and he dies. Not that the white doctor is always defeated by witchcraft. Recently a Johannesburg surgeon was called to operate on a native for acute appendicitis. The man refused to be operated on. "I have no appendicitis," he said. "I am bewitched. The witchman has put a frog in my stomach to eat me up."

"But then," said the surgeon gravely, "cannot another witchman remove it by magic?"

"Yes, but he wants a white bull, and I am poor." The surgeon thought that over. "Look here," he said, "I think you're right. There *is* a frog in your stomach—I felt him move just now! Why not let me remove him for you, and you won't have to pay the witchdoctor a penny piece?" Instantly, the patient agreed to the operation—and when he came round after the anaesthetic the surgeon showed him a bullfrog in a bottle. "There he is—you can take him home and show your people that *we* can deal with witchcraft, too."

Maticket Sabela lives in a crazy, topsy-turvy world. While he sits by his shanty waiting for clients, the township's Africans drift by him. A nurse with shiny black skin and a neat uniform goes bustling to a nearby clinic; padded-shouldered spivs in bright clothes drift past, chattering of girls and money; Shangaan women with their legs heavy with bangles and their hair shaved in tribal patterns wait for the bus at the street corner; grave African students in flannels walk by discussing Freud or Mozart.

They all accept him. He is a witchdoctor; they've known witchdoctors from birth. But what must Maticket make of his learned and sophisticated brethren? Perhaps they, too, consult him on the sly—certainly there are witchdoctors in Alexandra Township who wear lounge suits and have business cards reading: "The future foretold, happiness guaranteed," and their consulting rooms are seldom shabby.

Counterparts Nearer Home

Maticket himself, for all his lack of earthly possessions, is no beggar. He is plump and well fed. He foretells the future, solves problems, counteracts (in his own mind, at least) the evil influences that ruin people's lives. Maticket is sure he is a good man doing a good job.

Of course, he takes money—but then magic must be paid for; it cannot work unless money changes hands. Which is, of course, the answer of the gipsy fortune-teller who wants her palm crossed with silver. And while the palmist's tent still does good business in British seaside resorts, and people turn to the popular Sunday newspapers to read what the stars foretell, we cannot afford to scoff too loudly at Maticket Sabela and his magic bones. He is the consequence of something everyone knows—the wish to believe in powers that can change our daily lives for good or evil.

THE END

Mild-and-bitter barnstormers

Henry McCarthy and his actors have had a boom year putting on plays in pubs. Makeshift stages and asides from audiences call for a real trouper's toughness

by KEITH ELLIS

Twelfth Night in the lounge bar. Sometimes the audience crowds right up on to the stage

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON

McCarthy helps some of his players to make up. "There is no star system and no jealousy"

AN ADVERTISEMENT in the London evening newspapers last April read: "A week's free holiday offered to amateur actors. Take part in the Taverners' Festival of Britain tours." Though few of them had ever heard of the Taverners, 400 young men and women applied for the free acting holiday, and met forty-five year old Henry McCarthy, a neatly dressed six-footer with well-brushed, greying hair. As actor-organizer, he explained that the Taverners are a group of amateur actors who put on plays in pubs.

Normally two companies play houses in the London suburbs. This year, with the backing of the Festival authorities, McCarthy has formed ten companies who are presenting *Twelfth Night* to audiences in Northumberland, North and South Yorkshire, Lancashire, and the Midlands.

He has chosen 120 of the 400 applicants to spend a week's expenses-paid holiday in a provincial centre, on the understanding that they act each night. "We want to bring good drama to the man-in-the-street," says McCarthy, "and we believe the pub is the best place to find him."

Only One Man Walked Out

Full houses, with audiences up to 300 strong, suggest that this policy is justified. "The only opposition we ever had," says McCarthy, "was from a navvy sitting in the front row at a pub in Dagenham. When the play was announced, he picked up his pint, blew a raspberry and walked out." A more usual reaction is that of a Birmingham man who said: "I often wondered why people queued up to see Shakespeare. Now I know." One of his friends added: "We should have this every Saturday night."

"In the early days," says McCarthy, "audiences had to be 'educated.'" He explains: "Not being used to plays they tended to treat us like a cinema. They didn't know when to laugh and they were not used to the actors waiting." Not so one audience at Dagenham who "were absolutely uninhibited and treated *Hamlet* as a thriller. When Claudius incited Laertes against the Prince, one woman shouted 'The old bastard.'" An even stronger remark during *The Dear Departed* while the relatives were dividing the furniture of a supposedly dead father was followed by "Serves you —— right," when it was found the father was not dead after all.

When McCarthy announced in 1947 that the Taverners were to put on *Othello*, their first Shakespeare play, a critic asked if the public really wanted tragedy with its pint. He did not know that the decision had been reached after patrons had asked for something meatier than the bills of three one-act plays the Taverners had previously produced. Actually, *Othello* was their most successful play ever and *Noah*, a religious drama about the events in the Ark during the Flood, ran it a close second. "The quality of attention is extraordinary," says McCarthy.

Costume Plays Are Preferred

Since then, the Taverners have produced more Shakespeare, Shaw, Pinero, Molière, Gogol, Chekhov and Priestley, with a preference for costume plays to brighten up drab surroundings.

Before taking a play to a new pub, McCarthy first visits the house to see if there is a room remotely suitable. If so, the landlord gets a licence from the local authorities and displays

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Chafik didn't see the figure in the bushes. As he opened the door, the man rose up to strike

The Little Shadow

by CHARLES B. CHILD

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

THE BOY WAS A WAIF who frequented the great bazaar of Baghdad. He was small for his years, which were perhaps eight, very slim and high waisted, with delicate hands and feet, a bright elfin face and large, dark eyes. He wore a ragged gown girdled with a piece of rope, his turban was a wisp, he had never owned shoes; his only possession was a basket in which he used to carry the purchases of shoppers for a few pennies.

Chafik J. Chafik, an inspector of the Criminal Investigation Department, stood on the steps of the Imperial Bank and idly watched the child as he flitted through a patchwork of evening sunlight and shadow with the basket balanced on his head.

The inspector was turning away when he saw a man lurch from the crowd, turn on the boy, with whom he had collided, and strike him in the face. It was a brutal blow and the youngster dropped the basket and clasped his arms over his head, but they made a frail barrier. When the man raised a heavy brass-bound stick with intent to continue the senseless beating, Inspector Chafik ran down the steps, wrenched it away, and threw it behind him.

He said mildly, "Temper is as intoxicating as alcohol."

The man turned. He had pale lips, flattened to his teeth, dilated eyes staring with madness. Normally, authority was Chafik's protection, and he was suddenly and painfully aware of muscular inadequacy; but he drove his elbow against the man's nose, bringing a bright gush of blood. Then, rising on his toes in an effort to increase his stature, he used his forearms as clubs.

A constable intervened opportunely with a swinging gun Inspector Chafik said, "Two blows are enough. This head is not a nut, there is no sweetness in it. But I advise handcuffs. We have madness here." There was blood on his sleeve and he looked at it with disgust, for he was a meticulously neat man.

"As an angry cockbird ruffles its feathers, so I have ruffled my clothes," he said to the boy.

The face that turned up to him was white and frightened. Tears welled in the big eyes, but the boy held them back with courage, even with dignity, a quality engaging in a waif who begged his daily subsistence. Chafik sighed and took money from his pocket.

"Go, fill your belly," he said, as he thrust the coins at the boy.

A grubby little hand touched his sleeve, clung to it. "Sahib," the boy said. "You are my father, sahib."

It was a pleading, not a wheedling, voice. Chafik smiled, but was startled when he saw

The boy was homeless; the inspector childless. Was it fate or the drug runners that planned their meeting?

how worshipfully the boy looked at him. "How are you named?" he asked.

"They called me Feisal."

"That is the name of our young king. Who named you so royally?"

Feisal shook his head. "There was once a woman who called me Feisal. Very long ago when I was small. She died," he added vaguely.

"And now you are a man?" Chafik asked gravely.

"A man, sahib. I work. Truly I do not steal much." The big eyes glowed with gratitude and adoration. "That one would have killed me. I saw it in his face. You are my father, sahib. I will go with you."

The inspector was embarrassed. He had been married many years and was childless, a circumstance which could be adjusted by polygamy under Moslem law. But he was devoted to his wife; although he knew she was distressed by lack of children, he had convinced himself they would have disorganized his well-regulated home.

"Take the money and eat," he said, and turned his back.

The constable had secured the man, and Chafik bent and rolled back an eyelid, then announced, "One sees the reason for madness."

"Hashish!" The inspector clasped his slender hands with unexpected emotion. For several months he had been trying to stop a flow of narcotics responsible for a crime wave in Baghdad. In spite of his efforts, hashish continued to enter the city, and in its wake came violence and death. The attack on the boy was typical.

When a police ambulance arrived, the inspector walked away. The cigarette he had lighted had a bitter taste and he dropped it, but could not discard the bitter thoughts. He threaded a path between the benches that overflowed from the cafés, turned right at the intersection of Samawal and Al-Rashid Streets, and walked under the shabby arcade to his headquarters. He had the sensation of being followed as he entered the narrow doorway and turned swiftly.

He saw an elfin face and appealing eyes. "Sahib!" Feisal pleaded. "You are my father, sahib."

"Away with you!" Chafik said, and, losing dignity, he ran up the worn steps to his office.

INSPECTOR CHAFIK was received by his assistant, tall, gaunt, unemotional Sergeant Abdullah, who was sufficiently stirred by the sight of his superior's bruised cheek and ruffled clothes to say in a solemn voice, "Sir, I trust the individual who assaulted you is detained."

"In the hospital, my dear Abdullah. But I did not put him there. He is the victim of hashish."

"Sir, we have many hashish victims today. I bring you the reports. Two killings. Five assaults with intent to kill——"

"The menu is unappetizing and unvaried," said Chafik. "There is always a list of crimes over the weekend." The inspector took a manicure set from a drawer and began to clean his nails.

After a moment he said, "My conclusion is that no hashish is stored in Baghdad; if it were, it would be distributed more evenly throughout the week. It is smuggled in. But when? And how? I am a policeman, not a seer. What is the source of the drug? Does it come from Syria? From Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait or Persia? Or is it brought by sea from India?"

The sergeant said gloomily, "So many places, sir."

"And so many routes. There are highways, a railroad, the trans-desert autobus, aircraft and innumerable camel caravans."

"We watch them all. The frontier checks are severe——"

Inspector Chafik interrupted: "Can we guard every mountain path? One man with the legs of a goat can carry enough hashish to poison half Baghdad." He put away the manicure set, breathed on his nails and gave them a final rub with a silk handkerchief. "Our records show crime increases with the waning of the week, and in this is a clue. But like a photographic negative the image does not appear until developer is applied. Somehow we must find the means of developing the image hidden in our records. . . . But enough for the day."

He was too preoccupied to see the boy who lurked under the arcade, but when he reached his car parked on the city square, he was roused by a light touch. An eager voice began: "Sahib! My father."

It pulled the trigger of temper and the inspector shouted, "Out, Pestilence!" and slammed the door of the car. He drove over the great steel bridge that spanned the river. His home was in the Street of the Scatterer of Blessings, off Mansour Avenue. The yellow brick house, which was small and typically suburban, was cooled by breezes from the Tigris. Chafik latched the street gate, carefully wiped his shoes, and let himself into the softly lighted hall.

Leila, his wife, a dark, slim little woman, was there to welcome him. She said, anxiously, "You are late, my man."

She manoeuvred him into a chair, removed his shoes and brought his slippers. He sniffed the appetizing odour of the waiting meal, sighed and said: "Yes, I am tired, too. Also hungry. One cannot eat records."

After eating, it was possible to relax. The only sound in the house was the ticking of a clock, and he was grateful for the quiet and closed his eyes.

Leila stood at the window, hidden by the curtains, watching the street. Suddenly she said: "The house is watched."

Chafik sat up. "What?"

"There is a boy outside. He has been there for some time."

Her husband joined her and saw Feisal leaning against the gate. The elfin face was white and pinched in the light of the street lamp. Chafik reacted with confusion. He felt compassion, as for a lost and woebegone puppy, then anger came and he went to the door, but changed his mind and came back. "This foolishness must end," he said to Leila, and explained what had happened. "He follows me everywhere," he complained.

"Such a little boy, and he has such charm," Leila said wistfully.

"A waif. No doubt he has lice. I gave him money for food. That was my mistake."

"Such a little boy," said Leila, sighing.

Irritably, her husband announced that he was going to bed, and left her still at the window.

HE slept heavily, but not well. In the morning when he went out, the familiar small figure was waiting. He noticed crumbs on the mouth that curved to greet him and had a dark thought for his wife as he brushed past the boy.

During the day he caught glimpses of Feisal and continued to ignore him. When he came home in the evening, the boy appeared so quickly outside the house, Chafik guessed he had stolen a ride on the back of a car, perhaps his own. He felt helpless and his wife gave no

A grubby little hand clutched his sleeve. "You are my father, sahib." The voice was pleading

comfort; suddenly she had become withdrawn.

The problem of the drug smuggling was a leech in his mind and he could think of little else as midweek approached and, with it, the dreaded increase in hashish crimes. He was tormented because he was certain the answer of when and how the drug entered the country was in his records. These records were amazingly detailed, and included files on all regular travellers to and from Baghdad, and on all known criminals in the city. But to attempt to unearth the answer in his crammed filing cabinets without a key would be as difficult as finding the proverbial needle in a haystack.

ON Thursday morning, when Chafik found Feisal waiting as usual, he got into his car and recited a few calming verses from the Koran, then reopened the car door. "Come, Pestilence," the inspector said. He remembered Leila at the window and was embarrassed by his odd impulse towards the boy.

Feisal began to chatter gaily. The pleasant young voice disturbed thinking, but when the boy said, "Sahib, today I shall make money," Chafik came out of preoccupation and wondered a little irritably what could be done for the persistent child.

"How will you make money?" he asked, slowing the car.

"A train comes. There are things to carry. People tired with travel pay well," Feisal added wisely.

"So today you will eat. But what of tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow does not matter if I eat well today, sahib."

"I envy you your philosophy," Chafik said. "Myself, I would be distressed by such ups and downs. The graph of my life follows an even line; if yours were plotted it would soar to a zenith, then plunge to the nadir. And again to the zenith and so on, indefinitely. Such a graph would be untidy, but the pattern would reveal the fluctuations of your belly, the days when——"

His voice died and he forgot the boy. He was fascinated by his hand which had left the wheel to trace a wavy line in the air. "A graph!" he shouted. "The key—the formula." The car shot ahead through traffic lights and was parked hastily. For the second time in these few days, the sedate little inspector astonished the guard

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Team of two fights danger in the home

by NORMAN PHILLIPS

Their battle against burns and scalds has uncovered a horrifying record of accidents. Most of them happened to children—and more than half could have been avoided

A LITTLE MORE THAN five years ago, Dr. Leonard Colebrook, a grey-haired Birmingham bacteriologist, invited a middle-aged widow from Malvern to lunch one Sunday. The doctor was a busy man, so he asked his guest if she would meet him at his laboratory in the Birmingham Accident Hospital.

His guest arrived at the hospital just before one o'clock and climbed two flights of stairs to the Medical Research Council's Burns Unit. She left several hours later—without having had any lunch, but with an idea that became a crusade. Since that day she has become what she calls "a whole bush of thorns" in the sides of manufacturers, officials, Members of Parliament and anyone she can enlist in her fight against burns and scalds. She also married the doctor.

The Colebrooks were married in 1946. Two years later, Colebrook retired from his position as head of the Burns Unit at Birmingham, but he and his wife have gone on with their campaign. Today, their country cottage at Farnham Royal, Bucks, is an international clearing house for information on such subjects as fire prevention, fire-proofing and teacup design. More important still, the Colebrooks have made it their business to find out why there are so many burning accidents—accidents which are costing the country something like £1,250,000 a year for hospital treatment alone.

The war taught medical men more about treating burns than had been learned in the previous fifty years. Before the war, it was accepted that a patient with more than a third of his body burned would die. Since 1945, in Birmingham at least, a child with half its body burned is given an even chance of survival.

New techniques, new drugs and surgical skill continue to reduce the death rate from burns. One method is the early grafting of skin. Sometimes skin has to be borrowed. The borrowed skin seldom lasts more than a fortnight before going into holes, as if the moth had got in it. However, it does last long enough to allow the burns victim time to grow new skin where the surgeon has removed some for grafting. The fresh growth is "recropped" to replace the borrowed skin. Only identical twins can donate skin to one another and be sure that such grafts will be permanent.

No Cut In Accident Rate

Advances in medicine are saving lives, but what worries the doctors is the fact that there is no sign of the number of cases diminishing, though they know that a high percentage of burns accidents could be prevented.

That was what struck Vera Colebrook so forcibly the first time she visited the Accident Hospital and went to see some of the patients in the specially segregated burns ward.

"If I had been a nurse or had had some medical training," Mrs. Colebrook says, "that ward might not have affected me as it did. There was a girl there swathed in bandages. She was burned over four-fifths of her body. She lived in great misery for ninety days. I never knew people could be so badly burned and live at all. There was a woman with her face burned and I thought: 'The face above all things for a woman.' For a split second I lived the rest of that woman's life for her."

Back in the laboratory, surrounded by glass dishes for growing microbes, gas burners, gas brackets and a refrigerator where skin is kept, Colebrook explained to his visitor how medical science has reduced the annual number of deaths from burns from 2,500 in 1900 to 700.

The doctor cleared the laboratory table where he worked and brought out his records. "They were in an exercise book," Mrs. Colebrook recalls. "Nobody had had time to prepare complete statistics. We went through the details of 300 cases—admitted to the one hospital in one year—and I began to see the background to

Bedtime—and danger time. "Over and over again, it was the same story: clothing caught fire"

accidents. Over and over again it was 'Night-dress touching an unguarded fire.' "

That same Sunday evening, Colebrook and his future wife sat down and formed themselves into a committee of two—they still work on that basis—and planned a national campaign against accidents involving burns and scalds. They decided to make a detailed study of 1,000 cases and took for their sample the patients admitted to the Birmingham Accident Hospital. Mrs. Colebrook investigated each case, sometimes visiting the scene of the accident. The one-thousandth case was reached by August, 1948. They have recently completed the analysis of a second thousand accidents.

Ninety-five per cent of burns cases have nothing at all to do with houses on fire. That was the first thing the Colebrooks discovered. They also found that seventy per cent of the accidents happened at home; and that the death rate from home accidents was five times that of industrial burns and scalds. What was most shocking was the fact that more than half the home accidents happened to youngsters under the age of five, and seventy per cent of the mishaps involved children under fifteen.

Horrifying stories continued to find their way into Mrs. Colebrook's casebooks. There was the girl of seven who stooped down to switch off an electric fire. The hem of her dressing-gown brushed against the unguarded red-hot element. She was admitted to hospital with thirty-five per cent of her body covered with burns. A boy of four set his clothes on fire with a gas poker. Perhaps the most tragic case turned a wedding party into family grief for a dreadfully burned bridesmaid. This little girl was wearing a dress made of lacquered net. A cigarette in the hands of a guest barely touched the delicate material and it flamed like a torch.

Menace Of The Open Fire

More than half of the burns to children under fifteen resulted from direct or indirect contact with heating appliances such as open coal fires, gas and electric radiators. The most serious injuries came under the heading, "Clothing caught fire." The cheery open coal fire, in the light of the Colebrooks' investigation, took on a sinister aspect. "This is still the outstanding hazard of the English home," Dr. Colebrook declares. "The experience at Birmingham suggests that coal fires are responsible each year for nearly 300 deaths and 2,000 non-fatal injuries severe enough to require admission to hospitals."

The dangers of the unguarded fire became a theme for talks given by Mrs. Colebrook on the air, to women's groups and to anyone who would listen. One listener was Mrs. Darcy Braddell, a London inventor, who was so impressed that she went home and designed a new safety fireguard which minimizes the fireplace hazard.

A Birmingham father heard a Colebrook broadcast about the dangers from unguarded electric fires (annual death toll estimated at 250, mostly children) and produced a simple and effective screen that can be attached to almost any type of electric and gas fire.

The Colebrooks experimented with electric fires and found that contact lasting one or two seconds is sufficient to set inflammable clothing burning fiercely. They went to the Ideal Home Exhibition and counted twenty-eight types which they considered inadequately guarded as against eight that were safe. They badgered manufacturers and got the reply that effective guards would detract from the appearance and efficiency of heaters and that the public didn't want them.

Laboratory tests proved that a light guard makes no appreciable difference to the efficiency of a fire. Mrs. Colebrook enlisted the help of the National Council of Women and the Women's Institutes. Both organizations backed her proposal that proper guards be made compulsory.

Recent metal shortages have added to the difficulties to be overcome. With limited stocks of materials, manufacturers are reluctant to use up supplies by making guards. Another factor is the increased price because the guard itself is subject to purchase tax.

One immediate aim is to get the Government to remove the purchase tax on properly guarded fires. "And if the manufacturers will not show themselves sufficiently concerned about the public safety," says Dr. Colebrook, "the sale of these fires should be subject to specific safety regulations analogous to those which control dangerous drugs and poisons."

On the basis of the Birmingham statistics, it is estimated that there are 21,000 victims of burns and scalds admitted to hospital each year. The average stay of these patients is forty days. The average cost per hospital day is reckoned to be at least thirty shillings. The total cost for hospital treatment of these in-patients is at least £1,260,000. These figures take no account of the much larger number of people who are treated in the casualty wards and as outpatients.

A Million Man-days Lost

The cost to the nation each year of all burns and scalds cases has been estimated at one million man-days plus one million child-days lost to schooling. Serious cases occupy nearly one million sorely needed bed-days in our hospitals.

"And the terrible thing about all this waste," says Mrs. Colebrook, "is that more than half the accidents we have studied need not have happened. Fifty-four per cent of the scalds were preventable, about thirty-eight per cent were not. By far the largest number of scalding accidents (sixty-seven per cent) involved children under five, and more than half these cases occurred when the child pulled or knocked over a teapot or a cup of tea or a container of other scalding liquid placed within its reach. More than ten per cent of the children under five were injured by falling into baths, buckets or washtubs full of hot water, left on the floor. It's pretty clear the design of teapots and teacups is bad, because most of them are top-heavy. And the upturned edge of saucers is a particular source of danger to toddlers just able to reach up to the edge of the table.

"Fifty-five per cent of the burns accidents," she says, "would have been prevented if the fire had been guarded or the clothing had been less inflammable. Girls and women are more often the victims of blazing clothing: full skirts are more likely to come into contact with fires than are trousers. Cotton nightclothes (flannelette and winceyette) are another menace. So is artificial silk. Nylon usually melts, rather than flames, but if it is mixed with cotton or rayon it becomes highly dangerous. We've bought all these materials and tested their rate of burning under laboratory conditions. The result is terrifying. A child's nightdress, for instance, will catch alight within three seconds and be completely destroyed in less than one minute."

The odd thing is that forty years ago, following an agitation by many coroners, a fireproof flannelette was actually produced and marketed in England. It disappeared during the first World War, because the process depended on tin. Today, with tin at £1,250 a ton, this process cannot be economically revived. Alternative fire-proofing processes are up against other difficulties; they come out in the wash, or damage the fabric, or bring the wearer out in a rash.

Dresses That Will Not Burn

However, a new American process, depending on titanium and antimony, seems to have possibilities. The Colebrooks have tested fine cotton dress material proofed by this method. After being soaked for twenty-four hours and boiled for sixty minutes, the dried fabric still would not flame. They went about for a week with bits of the material strapped to themselves with surgical plaster and did not come out in a rash. But this process is not generally available, and goods treated with it will be more expensive than untreated material.

Exchanges of information bring a steady flow of mail from all parts of the world to the Colebrook cottage. The State Fire Marshal of California sent samples of a new long-pile rayon so inflammable that when a man wearing it lit a cigarette, the witnesses said he "just seemed to explode into flame." A letter from Africa mentioned that some Africans cook their early morning meal over a fire started in a hole in the ground. They don't always extinguish the embers, and the correspondent recounted several cases of severe burns that have resulted. The most seriously burned victims have been women who have been persuaded by missionaries to wear Mother Hubbards. The bright cotton cloth is, of course, highly inflammable.

No one disputes the claim that fire-proofed clothing would save lives or that needless suffering could be eliminated by making guards compulsory for portable fires. "In the beginning, we used to feel we were being muffled by agreement," says Mrs. Colebrook, "as if people were saying: 'Carry on with the good work, all our inertia is behind you.' But not now. Things really seem to be moving at last." THE END

Dr. Colebrook operates an instrument to test air for bacteria before treating burned child

Is it fireproof? The Colebrooks test materials sent to their cottage from all over the world

Adriana turned away like a sleep-walker. The pain of the bullet wound in Mercer's shoulder dragged him back, but there was something he had to say

Venetian Bird

by VICTOR CANNING

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR SEABRIGHT

Mercer was desperate—but one thing meant more than escape. If he could get even with Uccello, the police would believe him. And so would Adriana

VENICE WAS IN AN UPROAR. Nervi, the people's hero, had been shot, and Edward Mercer, the Englishman arrested for the crime, had escaped. . . .

That was the situation only a few days after Mercer had arrived in the city on what had seemed a straightforward inquiry job—to find an Italian called Gian Uccello who had earned a reward for saving a rich man's son during the war.

But in Venice, Mercer met Adriana Medova, a beautiful and talented designer. He fell in love with her only to find she was married—to Gian Uccello, the elusive figure Mercer had seen many times in another identity but never recognized.

Uccello's other identity was Cassana, the street photographer who was on the police payroll to watch Mercer. Unknown to Adriana—and the police—Uccello was mixed up with her employer, Count Boria, in a plot to create trouble throughout the country, then step in and seize power. Uccello's rôle in the plot was to start the trouble by shooting Nervi, the national hero.

Count Boria became alarmed when Mercer began finding out the truth about Uccello, who, as far as the police knew, had been killed in an air raid. At all costs the Englishman had to be shaken off.

At first, the Count tried to buy him off, then beat him off. When that failed, too, Mercer, with "blood money" planted on him, was framed for shooting Nervi and handed over to the police. Without Uccello, who was in hiding, to prove him innocent, the facts pointed to Mercer as the paid assassin of unknown plotters. . . .

That was how it looked to Spadoni, the local police chief, and, Mercer realized, that was how it must look to Adriana, too. His only hope now lay with Rosa Melitus, an old-time colleague.

When he escaped from arrest, Mercer went to Rosa's house. She hid him in an attic room and told him to wait.

That night, Rosa returned with a plan. Her friend Bernardo would help smuggle Mercer out of the country; the signal to leave would be three taps on the skylight.

"That will be Tallius, the undertaker," Rosa told him. "Do as he says."

FINAL INSTALMENT

Mercer's Gamble

THE clocks had just struck five when the tapping came on the skylight. Mercer pushed it open and saw a man's face framed in the pale, grey square of early morning. It was a lean, tight-skinned face, the thin lips pursed as though on the point of whistling. Iron-grey hair was cropped closely over the broad head. The man made a motion with his hand and Mercer climbed out.

Far out over the lagoon, beyond the Lido, the sea was turning to a pearl blush as the sun rose. Islands and houses were black silhouettes against the growing light, and a thin wind trembled

Continued on page 25

HARRY HOPKINS REPORTS FROM THE FAR EAST (2)

I patrol Hongkong's waterfront

Hongkong and the New Territories. Dotted line is boundary of area leased to Britain

Two vital forces keep the peace in troubled Hongkong. Harry Hopkins in another brilliant dispatch tells how he went on anti-smuggling patrol with the police, and saw how our troops in the field are manning defences

HONGKONG

A SAMPAN BUCKED and rolled madly in our wake. To our starboard, Stonecutters' Island writhed like an elongated Oriental lizard; to port rose the rounded, tree-covered hump of Green Island; ahead the wild, rugged mountains of Lantau were coming up. Inspector Roy Turner, holding on to the side of the police launch, waved a hand at the horizon. "Hongkong," he said, "is a pinprick on the map of China. But when you're a marine policeman and you're down on the waters, there are times when it seems like the universe."

Behind us, to one side, spread the city of Kowloon, miles of shops and warehouses piled with the world's goods. Behind the thronged, tumultuous streets rose the brown humps of the Nine Dragons which gave the place its Chinese name. Behind the Nine Dragons, in range beyond range, rose the green mountains of the New Territories which, in 1898, Britain leased from China for ninety-nine years. And behind them, twenty-odd miles away, lay China and 400,000,000 Chinese, a great and ancient people that was on the move again.

Behind the police launch, the ferries criss-crossed the harbour linking Kowloon to the island of Hongkong—the unbroken line of solid, four-square commercial buildings, the banks, the great trading houses, forming an imposing, ponderous front, and then, three streets back, the steps beginning as the houses started to climb towards the Peak.

It is an heroic sight—one of the great man-made sights of the world. The first time you see it, it takes your breath away, like your first view of the Manhattan skyline. Hongkong people feel they have something to boast about; and they are right. A hundred years ago, Hongkong was a barren, malarial island inhabited by only a few poor fishermen. The Chinese, with contempt, called it "the pigeons' nest." Even today, before you can build you must level a hillside or reclaim from the sea. Pure water is still a chronic problem.

Hongkong is the extraordinary fruit of the extraordinary partnership of two remarkable peoples—peoples a world apart and yet sharing

Police Patrol Boat No. 3 hoves to for the inspector's launch. The boarding is in naval style

To Hongkong's "boat people" their sampan is their country. They live, have children and die in it

much, including a respect for each other. The British supplied the vision, the organization; the Chinese supplied their own unique, demoniacal energy. And, for a century, every time the Chinese volcano rumbled or erupted, more Chinese came to Hongkong. Today there are over two million of them; more than ever before in Hongkong's history. They come, and they stay, for the same reason they have always come and stayed: they come to enjoy the peace and freedom to work and live and breed which they cannot find in their homeland.

The peace of Hongkong, when you analysed it, came down to quite a few men: men like this tall, cheerful, down-to-earth police inspector on the other side of this police launch. Fourteen years or so ago, Roy Turner was sitting having tea in the basement of a jeweller's shop in Brighton when his attention was caught by an advertisement in the newspaper he was reading. It offered to adventurous young men a life of action in the Palestine Police. Turner had just received his first diploma as a jeweller; but it did not take him long to make up his mind. He handed in his notice, and next week took the boat to Palestine. His career led him to Hongkong.

Michael Illingworth of Police Patrol Boat No. 3 boards the *Tungon*. These pictures were taken by Harry Hopkins on the patrol

Inspector Turner has to keep the law in 112 islands and 600 miles of coastline. Yet he considers he's the luckiest man in the Force

Today he is responsible for the good order of a division which includes 112 islands, 600 miles of coastline, bays, creeks and inlets, 700 square miles of water, 17,000 licensed native craft, 25,000 trading in and out of Hongkong, 150,000 "boat people" who live upon the waters of Hongkong, besides all those, of every race in the world, who pass through them.

The task does not alarm him. Embargoes on war materials to China are just one more regulation in a list a yard long, to be taken in his stride. "We are just policemen with webbed feet," he says. And, like good British policemen, they have everything under control—or nearly.

A sand junk swept by, its black-and-white mast indicating its licence to carry sand from selected beaches for the government sand monopoly. The wind whipped past us, the sun beat down. The hills and islands opened up idyllically before us. "Sometimes," said Turner, "I think I'm just about the luckiest man in the Force."

We were on our way to a radio-fixed rendezvous with Patrol Boat No. 3—one of the six patrol vessels which divide the water "beats" between them. Every hour each patrol boat reports its position and any incident to headquarters. We were running through the Typhoon Anchorage. The masts rose in a forest on all sides of us. The junks lay tied together in long lanes, each of which had its Chinese name. Below the junks hundreds of sampans crowded and jostled. Under the dark hoods you caught a glimpse now and then of a woman bending over simmering pans of rice. Small children crawled over the floor. "They spend all their lives on those boats," said Turner. "They live and have children and die there. They are neither Communists nor Nationalists. That"—he pointed to a sampan—"is their country."

In Naval Tradition

Police Patrol Boat No. 3—a converted Grimsby trawler mounting an Oerlikon gun—hove to ahead of us. The boarding was naval style. The three European officers, three coxswains and ten marine constables lined the deck, standing to attention, as our launch came alongside. The captain, a young sub-inspector named Michael Illingworth, took the inspector down below to inspect the log, nautical on one side, with course and weather observations, police notebook on the other.

Patrol Boat No. 3 was on the third day of its routine four-day-and-night continuous patrol. The record showed that in those three days Illingworth and his men had stopped and searched forty-five native craft, two trading junks, four motor trading junks and one motor launch. One trading junk, found to have one and a half tons of oil in the bunkers, had been checked for false tanks not connected with the engine—oil smuggled to China brings eight times the Hongkong price. A Communist launch had been sighted and noted west of Lintin Island. And, finally: "One Chinese female arrested on Ma Wan Island in possession of an opium pipe and one pot of prepared opium."

The patrol boat's siren sounded . . . long, short, long. Over to our starboard bow a small low tug stopped its engines and hove to. Armed with Sten guns, the marine constables took up their boarding positions. As we came alongside, they leaped down on to the tug's decks, thrust long steel probes into the coal, jumped into the holds, searched the crew. Hongkong's smugglers are among the world's most accomplished, for Hongkong was born out of smuggling—the earliest form of the Chinese-British partnership.

"The other day," said Turner, "one of our chaps was dipping a fuel tank when the opening seemed a bit odd. He probed about a bit and out came a pipe which ended up at only half the depth of the tank." A little later, Customs

Marine police examine junk for contraband.

men seized two geese and six pounds of peanuts. Between them, they contained 358 taels of gold, being smuggled from Portuguese Macao, where there is a free market, to Hongkong. On examination, the police found that 1,497 of the peanuts had been carefully split and a tiny bar of gold inserted. Then each had been delicately stuck together again. The geese had to be killed and gutted before their golden eggs came to light.

But the *Tungon* seemed to be all that her captain and manifest claimed—just an empty tug steaming the ninety miles or so up the Pearl River to Canton to bring back a lighter, probably loaded with rice or pork, vegetables and chickens, food from Communist China for capitalist Hongkong.

How far in this vast, intricate confusion of islands, craft and men is any embargo enforceable? "I don't know," said the inspector. "But say we're getting twenty per cent—it may be a good deal more. Nobody knows. It's the deterrent value that matters.

"That fishing sampan you saw under detention back in Kowloon with a dozen barrels of petroleum jelly under the floorboards where the fish should be: the 'master' is a woman. But she's only a tool in the game. Now the C.I.D. takes over the case. There are scores of companies with high-sounding names and you go over to their office address and you find one room and a table. The company isn't the room, and it isn't the table—it's just one of the men sitting at that table. There are your master minds. . . ."

Sleepy Isle Keeps Its Eyes Open

At the island of Ping-Chau, which is shaped like a small letter "c," we put a patrol ashore. We drank a glass of pale and fragrant yellow tea with the manager of the island's match factory. Then we walked down the single village street, past the pork shops and the shops with their lichees and oranges and yellow plums on sticks and blackened, earth-cured eggs. From an upper room of the tea-house came the roar and rattle of mah-jong. In the temple on the corner, the guardian was stretched out, half-asleep, with a newspaper. We came, we were noted, we noted, and we left. "Not much on Ping-Chau," said the inspector, "except gaming on pay-days and

In one search the police found tiny bars of gold cunningly concealed inside some peanuts

a bit of opium-smoking. But a hard island to raid. Once we had almost got ashore on a sampan when a fisherman let go a terrific blast on a conch shell. After that it was hopeless."

This patrolling of the Territory's many islands, inhabited and uninhabited, is an important part of the Marine Division's work. On some of the larger islands there are police stations; on others, the patrol has to sign a book held by the village headman or at the post office.

Commando Raid On Thugs

In the tiny Sokos—the most easterly of Hongkong's orbit of islands—a typical racket came to light. It appeared that a certain Chinese tough had set himself up as "King" of the islands. Notices had been stuck on the doors of all the fishermen's homes telling them that they must sell their fish to him—or else. To give weight to the "or else," the "King" had imported a gang of thugs from China. For the police it was just one more of many island commando operations. They went ashore stealthily by night in sampans. They got the whole gang. But the case went on in court for thirteen months. The "King's" terror had been so effective that witnesses were still afraid to come forward.

"In the past," said the inspector, "we've had a lot of trouble from that. The Chinese won't help us. But I think we're getting over it now. We're out to show them that the police are the servants of the public. Our boats take St. John Ambulance teams, with a doctor and a dentist, round the islands. Then we shall be able to say 'Ah, you're the fellow we pulled a tooth out for last spring.' Right now, one of our launches has gone off to Lamma Island to see about a report of pig fever there, and take out a veterinary. Another is on its way to Tong-fuk to look into a report of white ants in the school house there."

Two and a half miles from the easternmost point of the easternmost island of the Sokos, Inspector Turner's division ends. Another two miles, and the five-starred red flag of China flies on the Mah Shan islands. Here the Chinese have 5,000 men. Here, too, they have indoctrination centres. Sometimes they will hail a junk, bring it in, give the master a short lecture on Marxist-Leninism and the shortcomings of the "running dogs of capitalism" on Hongkong.

From the deck of Inspector Turner's launch, the view of Red China is close but limited. Coming in to the narrow airfield of Kai-Tek by B.O.A.C. Argonaut from Singapore, you get a wider perspective. To the west, to the south, to the north, and through the chain of islands to the east, Red China encloses Hongkong in its hand. Hongkong is indeed "a pin-prick on the map of China." As such, it must present one of the most formidable defence problems that determined men were ever called upon to face.

On Christmas Day, 1941, Hongkong fell to the Japanese after eighteen days' fighting—eight on the mainland, ten on the island. The place was undermanned, totally unprepared. That, at least, is not going to happen again.

I stood with Captain Charles Flint, the South Staffords' adjutant, in the middle of their camp that rises up swiftly on the green foothills of the New Territories two miles or so from the China border. A magnificent vista of cloud and mountain unrolled before us. Except for the vivid green of the rice in the valley, we might have been in the English Lake District.

A raw, red jeep-track zigzagged up the mountain ahead of us, rising to nearly 1,000 feet. You see those jeep-tracks everywhere in the New Territories, New roads, too, scores of miles of them. In 1945 there was just a single road round the circumference. Now the Army has built new roads from east to west and north to south, bringing new life to the villages. Bridges have been strengthened for tanks; strong positions built in the mountainsides by the hundred.

Though today supplies and reinforcements can be brought up quickly, any fight for Hongkong would be—and must remain—a mountain war. For that, too, our men are prepared. Captain Flint pointed out the peaks ahead of us: "the Robin's Nest," "Cloudy Mountain," "the Mendips" and "China Mountain"—so called because China lies just behind it. To Flint and the South Staffords' officers and men those mountains are not just names. They know them, every track, every shoulder. They have patrolled over all of them, lugged rations and signals sets up them, gone out in small parties under junior officers on three-day trips in all weathers across them, taken part in exercises over them, run races up them. D Company is proud of having won the annual "Up the Mountain" race which our troops took over from their Gurkha neighbours.

The air-cover situation, too, has been vastly improved. A new airfield for jets has been constructed at Sek-Kong; another for Auster spotting planes, near Tai-Po; and the commercial airfield, Kai-Tek itself, is being improved. Most important of all, perhaps, the Army has been trained to co-operate with the police. The vast, complex street-maze of Hongkong and Kowloon has been fitted into a system with predetermined rendezvous points. There is an Army commander whose job it is to keep the plan up to date and put it into action at a moment's notice. For the colony's 20,000 troops and 4,000 police must combine in keeping watch on history's biggest Trojan Horse.

Law Hongkong Overlooks

A few hundred miles away, in Singapore, to display a red flag is treason; to possess Communist literature is a penal offence. In Hongkong, the red flag—with China's five stars—is an accepted part of the scenery. By rights, the Union Jack should be flown alongside it. But that is not the sort of law they care to enforce in Hongkong just now.

The Hongkong trade unions are divided into Nationalist unions and Communist unions. There are two Communist newspapers with modest circulations. There are also, sitting at desks in Hongkong's imposing commercial buildings, thousands of Chinese Government bankers and buying agents who are, theoretically, private firms. At present they are in Hongkong for the same reason that everybody else is: to trade, to barter China's tung-oil and tungsten and bristles and soya beans and egg products against the world's medicines and textile machinery and precision instruments. Trade has a logic all its own. Recently, through a British intermediary, the Chinese Government buyers were shopping for sugar in Chiang Kai-shek's Formosa.

Capitalist or Communist, if you want to trade there is no cheaper, no easier, place than this. In the heart and centre of Hongkong stand Queen's Building, Prince's Building, the Cenotaph, the Club, the domed Supreme Court and, behind, closing the square, presiding over it, the massive pyramid of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, which Hongkong citizens, who have a taste for irony, sometimes call "the Cathedral." The bank, whose directors include the heads of all the principal "hongs," was fittingly enough the tallest building in Hongkong—until now.

Parable Of The Lions

Today, something has been added. Alongside the massive white "Cathedral" rises an austere skyscraper, its topmost tower still framed in girders. In September, when the building is complete, the Bank of China will open for business: twenty feet higher than any other building in Hongkong, and a worthy monument to the power of the New China.

Outside the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank crouch a pair of famous British lions—benign, well-mannered Landseer types. Outside the Bank of China, still hidden by wooden fences, crouch two granite Chinese lions, reportedly "of ferocious aspect." A local newspaper rang up the manager of the Bank of China to inquire about these lions. "They are," announced the manager discreetly, "of no special significance at all. Lions are common on banks in China."

That, on both sides of the road, is still the voice of Hongkong: the voice of correctness, the voice of discretion and the voice of the bank managers. What most people in Hongkong are asking themselves—some openly, some secretly—is how long the party line is going to stay inside Hongkong's bulging trading ledger.

NEXT WEEK: I take a train to the Communist border—where lives are cheap and fantastic

The fair cop

by ***BRETON AMIS***

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD O. ROSE

To become the sergeant's son-in-law he had to have ambition. But Jim was just an easygoing copper . . .

IN GANGSTER FILMS, they say the only good cop is a dead cop. That's how our village felt about Sergeant Bunce, a pallid man with glass-marble eyes and grey shadows over his face. He looked like a corpse.

He hated us because our village had no more crime than most. Our only bad boy, Jerry Oakes, did his bit of burglary in the towns, living lawfully among us with his wife when he wasn't in the county jail. In twenty years there hadn't been a murder, culpable homicide, or even manslaughter, although we were sometimes sorely tempted. Round the taproom fire in the Woodpecker we'd take it in turns to tell what we'd like to do to the sergeant, and it ranged from a shot in the back on a dark night to rolling a barrel of four-X off the roof of the Woodpecker while he was snooping outside at closing time.

Jim Benger would often be with us to add his suggestions, and we listened with respect to Jim, for he was the sergeant's constable.

Tall and plump, Jim had dimples in his rosy cheeks, and buttercup-yellow hair, and cornflower eyes. He was so popular that he hardly rated as a policeman. Sooner than raise the arm of the law against a local lad, Jim would have cut it off.

A fine lad, was Jim, and we were sorry when he fell in love with the sergeant's daughter, Molly, because the sergeant didn't approve of him. According to the sergeant, Jim was bone lazy, unambitious, and too fond of consorting with undesirables—meaning us at the Woodpecker.

"He said I'd be a worse flop as a son-in-law than I am as a constable," Jim told us sadly, on the day after he had asked for Molly's hand. "He said if I didn't leave Molly alone he'd have me transferred or kicked out of the Force for neglect of duty. The charge book shows I've only had one case since Easter—the reckless driver who killed two of Farmer Jackson's chickens, and he got away on appeal. Maybe I ought to leave the Force and take to soldiering."

We didn't want that to happen. In country districts, sergeant and constable take alternate duty spells, so while Jim was with us, the village was free from police interference half the time—mostly at nights, when the sergeant was tucked cosily in bed.

"Molly's only nineteen, so we'll have to wait two years before we can marry without consent," Jim added, "and we aren't the waiting sort. I can't understand why Mr. Bunce thinks so poorly of me."

"It's your kind heart, Jim," we told him, and we went into committee while Mr. Fearn, the landlord, drew him another pint, on the house.

Sacrifices would have to be made, we decided, and we were prepared to make them. As spokesman, I was instructed to admonish Jim.

"Instead of blaming the sergeant, my lad, you've got to wake your ideas up and be a credit to him. It now wants five minutes to closing time, and you've been here for two hours when you ought to be out making arrests."

Jim said there weren't any arrests to be made, and since when had we worried about closing time?

The details of our plan were explained to him. This very night he was to prove himself capable of being a sergeant's son-in-law, so that we could live happily ever after—when the sergeant was off duty. Even then, we had to subscribe threepence each to prime him with a tot of rum before he would agree.

Then we sent him off after Ted Dawes, our drunk. Ted was steering a zig-zag course, as usual, falling down, picking himself up, and singing his old Army songs. He clung lovingly to Jim's arms and insisted on having a little waltz with him on the way to the sergeant's cottage where, according to regulations, Jim had to take him to be charged.

The sergeant had just gone to bed and wasn't too pleased about it. After all these years, he asked, why did Jim suddenly have to make up his mind that Ted Dawes was a drunk-and-incapable? He added that if Ted went on singing in the lock-up he'd come down and fetch him one.

Jim had a little walk round the lanes. Although we had prepared him for it he was pretty badly startled when Lefty Longman, our star poacher, jumped out at him. No policeman or gamekeeper had ever seen Lefty at night before, but here he was with a brace of rabbits in each hand, a sack of ferrets over one shoulder, and nets dripping from his pockets.

"You don't have to handcuff me, Jimbo," he said. "I'll come quietly."

But Lefty was Jim's best friend, having taught him how and where to net his own salmon. "I can't do it to you, Lefty," he said. "Besides, game is out of season and trespassing for conies only rates a summons, not a charge. Forget it, lad, but don't forget to leave a couple of those bunnies for my landlady."

They argued until Lefty became impatient. He knocked Jim's helmet off and jumped on it. "Assaulting the police," he claimed. "If you don't run me in, they'll dock your pay for a new helmet, and with you and Molly saving to be married, you just can't afford it. They won't jug me for a first offence, and Mr. Fearn has promised to pay all the fines."

BY this time it was after eleven and the sergeant, roused again from his warm bed, said things no sergeant should, especially when one of the ferrets escaped from Lefty's sack and ran over his slippers. Jim saw Molly peeping over the banisters and managed to blow a kiss to her before resuming his night patrol.

When he got outside the house, he headed out of the village to Farmer Jackson's hayricks, where he knew he'd find one or two casuals sleeping rough.

Normally he would not disturb them unless it started to rain, when he'd tell them where the barn was, but he guessed we'd cause trouble if he didn't do his duty this night, so he uncovered a couple, with apologies, and asked if they had any visible means of subsistence.

They hadn't, so after sharing his cigarettes equally between them and promising them five bob each when they were bound over in the morning, he took them along to the sergeant's cottage just as the church clock was striking two.

Molly came down to answer his knocking, because her father refused to waken. In her blue nightdress, with blue slippers on her tiny feet and love in her eyes, she looked so sweet that the vagrants politely turned their backs and smoked a cigarette while Jim kissed her and whispered that it wouldn't be long before her father gave his blessing.

They heard the sergeant cursing, and bawling at Molly to go back to bed. He glared at Jim as he booked the charges. "You're having a busy night, Benger," he snarled.

"I'm doing my duty, Sergeant," Jim said smugly. "These two make four—so far."

Chuckling, he went off to the Woodpecker, where a quart bottle was always left on the step for him, by arrangement. Also on the step was Jerry Oakes, our one and only jailbird, prising away at the door with a jemmy.

"You've kept me hanging around for over an hour, Jim," he complained, "and I catch cold easily. This is attempting to obtain illegal entry, and being in possession of housebreaking instruments by night. That ought to be good for three months, with my record."

Jim shared the quart bottle with him, turn and turn about, and tried at first to persuade him against it. But Jerry wouldn't be persuaded.

"I'm thinking of my wife," he said. "She deserves a break from me and I need a holiday

Molly, with love in her eyes

Jim, came down to let them in. While Jim was kissing her, the two vagrants politely turned their backs. Upstairs, they could hear the sergeant cursing

from her. Besides, I promised the governor's wife I'd be back to put the kitchen garden in proper order. It'll be a nice, steady job for three months."

He seemed so eager, Jim couldn't disappoint him. The cocks were crowing at the false dawn as they reached the sergeant's cottage. It took nearly twenty minutes to bring him down, and his language was so strong Jim would have memorized it to be used in evidence against him, if he hadn't been Molly's father. Jerry Oakes was disgusted. Any more of it, he threatened, and he'd have a word with the governor of the county jail, with whom he had influence.

As there was no more room in the lock-up, Jim bailed out Ted Dawes and helped the drunk home to bed before going home himself.

No-one knew who started the fire in the gorse bushes across the common from the sergeant's cottage, but he was knocked up by people who thought it might be Farmer Jackson's ricks. After that, he didn't go back to bed. He sat up, huddled in his overcoat, thinking of all the things he'd say when Jim came again. But Jim was snatching a few blissful hours in his own bed and they didn't meet again until it was time to take their prisoners to the petty sessions at the market town five miles away.

A good rest, a shave, and rabbit's liver and bacon for breakfast had put Jim on top of the world, but the night had left its mark on the sergeant. His eyes were like oysters with just a sprinkling of red pepper, his face was greyer than ever, except for the red nose that afflicts so many staunch teetotallers. Before court the inspector, who distrusted teetotal sergeants, took him aside and warned him he wasn't setting a very good example for a brisk young officer like Jim Benger, whose industry had resulted in the only cases from our village that morning.

Ted Dawes was fined ten shillings for being drunk and incapable; Lefty had to pay three pounds for knocking off a policeman's helmet and another three pounds for the conies, the magistrates being landed gentry; the two vagrants were bound over on condition that they left the neighbourhood; Jerry Oakes was committed for trial, with every prospect of getting the three months he wanted.

The way Jim kept popping up like a jack-in-the-box to reel off his evidence impressed the magistrates, who commended him for devotion to duty. They looked at the sergeant, haggard and half asleep, and said such zeal should set a good example in a village notorious for its unapprehended poachers. The sergeant wasn't any more popular with them than he was with us.

As they cycled back to the village, the sergeant had quite a lot to say. Jim listened respectfully, and asked if he was being reprimanded for the zeal the bench had commended. He hoped not, he added, because he rather thought he had another busy night in front of him. It was easy to find crime, if one went around looking for it, and as a young man he could stand up to the strain whereas an older one might crack. Of course, it would be different if he was the sergeant's son-in-law—he could share the cottage and they could work in even closer harmony.

Sergeant Bunce thought this over. The prospect of another sleepless night haunted him. "Why, Jim," he said at last, "you've turned out to be a much better constable than I ever expected, and if Molly wants to marry you I'll raise no objections. Come home now, lad, and we'll see what she has for dinner."

On Friday, the local paper gave quite a piece about his night of glory, quoting everything the magistrates had said. We cut it out, stuck it over the bar, and celebrated the victory in our usual carefree way. In the midst of the fun our hero looked in, and Mr. Fearn went to draw his usual pint.

"I won't touch drink when I'm on duty," Jim said stiffly, "and I'll remind you, Mr. Fearn, that you haven't a licence for singing and dancing. Also, it's one minute to closing time."

His eyes, more like blue pebbles than cornflowers, darted keen, warning glances round the taproom.

Mr. Fearn had us off the premises before we could recover from the shock. We expected to find Jim outside, laughing his big head off, but he wasn't. He was stealthily following Ted Dawes, waiting for him to fall down.

By special request of the taproom committee I followed on my bike to find out what was wrong.

I caught up with him as he was about to pounce on Ted Dawes.

"Jim," I said sternly, "you can't do this to us, after all we've done for you. Why, lad, we're getting up a subscription for the wedding present, and——"

Jim was feeling my lamp. "Quite cold," he said, in a dead, official voice, "so you can't pull the old one about it being blown out. You'll be receiving the summons in due course."

Then, for the first and last time, his conscience pricked him.

"Tell the lads I'm sorry," he murmured, "but Molly says I'll soon be drawing a sergeant's pay, if I go on as I started."

It shows how low a man will sink, once his ambitions are roused by a few words from the landed gentry and a bit in the newspaper.

None of us went to the wedding. THE END

Host to airborne animals

by ALAN PRICE

Taking care of a leopard that's got loose or monkeys on hunger strike is all in the day's work for Leslie Mason

WHEN A WIRY LITTLE MAN with close-curled greying hair walked into a Cranford, Middlesex, fish shop, pointed at the whole cod lying on the slab and said, "Two, please," the fishmonger was visibly upset. "Two what?" he asked. "Two cod," said the man. Thinking his customer would show more sense if he were kept waiting awhile, the fishmonger served someone else. That done, "Now what do you want?" he demanded. "I've told you: I want two cod." "For yourself?" "No, for my polar bears."

The unorthodox customer was Leslie Mason, livestock officer for British Overseas Airways Corporation. Though all animals travelling on B.O.A.C. planes are looked after on board by specially trained attendants or the crews of the York freight planes that bring them twice a week to London, Mason advises on their treatment and occasionally travels with them. He is also responsible for feeding and quartering in the livestock hut at Meadowbank, near Cranford, all animals in transit through London Airport.

During 1950 he looked after 160,000 live creatures flown in from Delhi, Calcutta and Singapore alone. They included tigers, bear-cubs, king-vultures, ants, crocodiles, leopards, flying foxes, pandas, poisonous snakes, a tortoise and a dozen types of wild birds. A preponderance of monkeys and the smell that adheres to his clothes after he has been dealing with them have earned Mason the local nickname of "monkey-man."

A typical shipment from a single plane included 250 monkeys, 5,000 birds, 600 fish, two leopards, twelve flying foxes, two Indian bears, twenty-four pythons and cobras, six lizards and six baby crocodiles. Since he has to feed these on landing, sometimes at minutes' notice, Mason keeps stocks of grain, oranges, grapes, sweet potatoes and ordinary potatoes constantly at hand. He has contacts from whom he can obtain meat unfit for human beings almost immediately. Other perishable foods are obtainable from local fishmongers, bakers and greengrocers while the animals are cleared by the Customs.

A baby elephant flies into London. Keeping animals caged is often easier said than done

As far as possible, animals are given the same food as they would eat in their natural homes. Lions, tigers and other beasts of prey are fed once a day with three pounds of raw meat for every seventy pounds of their weight. Sea beasts of prey need at least ten pounds of raw fish daily. Polecats, stoats and weasels prefer pieces of raw meat, a little fish or hard-boiled eggs.

Feeding A Python By Force

Snakes can travel a fortnight without food if they have been previously fed with whole live rats or pigeons. When a consignment which did require food refused to eat, Mason force-fed them by having their mouths held open while he broke in raw eggs. Unfortunately, one of the snakes grabbed his tie. A glance at the tightly clamped jaws convinced Mason that he would never retrieve it, so he cut off the end with scissors.

Gorillas, chimpanzees and orang-outangs have three meals a day of bread and butter with jam or honey, fruit and greens. They also enjoy a cup of tea. Orang-outangs are fond of being nursed like children, and, if they are slapped for being naughty, tend to sulk.

After a long journey from the Far East, three of them refused to eat. "They were awkward fellows, liable to turn nasty," says Mason. He decided to take them home, for without food they would never have survived their next trip to America. As it was a hot summer's day, he put them in a shed, took out a deck-chair and fell asleep on the lawn. Suddenly he was awakened by something hairy brushing against his leg. One of the orang-outangs had somehow managed to undo the latch of his cage. Knowing that his bite could be dangerous, Mason carefully edged him back to the shed.

On the way the orang-outang found some canary seed on the ground, scooped it up and ate it. When he was back in his cage, Mason fed him more canary seed, then wheat and finally cooked potatoes. Seeing their companion tucking in, the other orang-outangs joined him. The hunger-strike was over, and in two days' time all three were happily on their way to New York.

Another orang-outang who was shivering and sulky was taken to a dealer friend. "I don't know what he did with him," says Mason, "but when I went to see the orang-outang in the evening he was sitting in an armchair with a blanket round his shoulders, absorbed in a television programme."

Mason's rule for looking after animals is "treat them like yourself." He often keeps for his animals a tin of fruit his wife has had great difficulty in getting from the grocer. In cold weather, he keeps warm milk or water waiting for arrivals. The livestock hut itself is kept at a constant temperature of seventy-five degrees Fahrenheit, winter and summer.

Such consideration is not always appreciated by the animals, who persist in trying to escape. Most of them seek out dark corners where they fancy they will find safety and warmth. There are varying techniques for catching them. Mason seizes martens and foxes by the tail and holds them at arm's-length. He catches sea-lions and seals by the rear fins, taking care that their mouths cannot reach his legs or feet. Small monkeys are usually gripped behind the neck. Monkey bites, from which Mason's hands are rarely free, suggest that these methods are not always foolproof. Kangaroos tend to kick would-be captors in the stomach and ostriches to peck at the eyes.

Escapes happen at the most inconvenient times and places. While the plane on which Mason was accompanying a consignment of monkeys from the Far East refuelled at Bahrein, the crew took lunch and the animals were placed under the wings to shade them from the sun. They had just been put back in the plane in readiness for the take-off, when a crate of ten broke loose. "There was pandemonium," says Mason. The native porters were screaming almost as loudly as the monkeys. One was yelling "Tailo" at the far end: he had a monkey by the tail. Another was trying to attract Mason's attention to a monkey trapped between some crates, and a third had caught one between himself and the side of the plane. It took ten minutes to round them up.

Birds, especially when they escape in the open, cause even more trouble. A crane which had arrived from Calcutta with leg cramp was allowed to walk about the livestock hut at Meadowbank. It seemed quite tame and, as it was not due to leave for several days, Mason let it exercise outside. A few hours before its scheduled time of departure for Holland, he went out to catch it. As he reached forward, it took off and flapped away over the trees. Without waiting to carry out the drill of informing police and R.S.P.C.A., Mason jumped in his van and tried to follow. But too late, it had disappeared.

Caught In A Back Garden

People who live near Cranford are accustomed to seeing strange birds and animals that have escaped from the livestock hut and know where to report them. When he returned to Meadowbank, Mason was not altogether surprised to see a little old man on a bicycle waiting for him. "It's in our back garden," he said. Mason jumped back into his van. This time he knew what to expect as he approached the bird. As it sailed into the air he leaped forward and grabbed hold of one leg. It was just in time to catch its plane.

Sometimes Mason uses subtler methods to catch strays. When he received a message that several cages had broken in transit and hundreds of birds were loose in a plane, he was told to bring his nets. Knowing that most birds will not fly in the dark, he declined. He opened the door of the compartment at the rear of the plane, drove in the birds and switched out the light. They immediately settled so that he could pick them up one by one. In the

Mason gives a pick-me-up to a new arrival. Most animals like room to move about during a flight, but monkeys prefer to huddle together

same way, he recaptured a consignment of flying foxes that had broken out of their cages.

Birds refuse to eat in the dark and for this reason their cages are stowed in the plane facing the light. Mammals, however, find a journey more restful if they are carried in semi-darkness. Oblong boxes are better than square ones because the animal can press himself across the shorter side during rough handling or bumps in the air. He can also retire from the door if he feels the need for privacy.

Usually, animals are given plenty of room in which to move about, but monkeys like to huddle together. Anthropoid apes are happy only if they have a blanket or gunny-sack to snuggle in and, unless there are others of their own species travelling, they need constant human company to keep them from pining. Brazilian parrots and Australian gallaps are never caged in pairs because the stronger bullies the weaker. "And I've seen a bored-looking monkey reach down and bite its companion's tail—just for something to do."

Partridges, francolins and pheasants are liable to leap up and injure their heads, so a piece of canvas is stretched tightly across the box to form a protective false roof about two inches below the solid one. Alternatively, the roof may be padded with cotton or kapok.

The first requirement of any cage is that it should be nose and paw proof. For wombats, porcupine, squirrels, mice and rats, this involves a steel lining, as these animals will gnaw through unprotected wood. A close fitting is essential, for a persevering bear, starting with a loose corner or turned-up edge, could destroy the whole cage. In fact, making a cage nose and paw proof is easier said than done.

Mason once had a message from London Airport that a consignment of monitor lizards had broken loose in a freight plane. Though they were about four feet long and up to nine inches in diameter, he picked them up by the scruffs of their necks and popped them back in their cases. Next morning he was surprised to get a message that snakes and lizards were "crawling all over Cranford." Mason scratched his head. Though the crates were undamaged and covered by a 1½-in. wire mesh, they were almost empty. The space under the door of the hut was only 1½ in. high. How could the lizards, none of them under six inches in diameter, have escaped?

Strangest Way Of Slimming

Taking another look at one of the crates, Mason saw first a nose, then a pair of eyes emerging through the mesh. The neck followed and the forepart of a body abnormally thin. As more and more lizard oozed out, the hind part, which was still in the crate, swelled into a huge bulb. Finally, the bulb deflated itself through the hole into the forepart of the body, which regained its normal size. The whole lizard then flopped on to the floor. "That was a new one on me," says Mason.

He examines all arrivals, and if he sees anything suspicious, calls in a vet. Occasionally he has had to reach into a cage and pull out a stiff, pathetic corpse, but the percentage of deaths is very low. Once, he called in the vet to a full-grown tiger that had arrived very ill from the Far East. When the vet decided on a penicillin injection, Mason hooked the tiger's tail out of the cage and dragged it bodily to the side. The vet then gave it a shot in the buttock. Mason and the vet sat up all night and, about dawn, the vet decided that a kill-or-cure injection was the only alternative to destroying the tiger. Once more Mason dragged the animal to the side of the cage. Suddenly the tiger whirled round in a frenzy, bit through a two-inch by two-inch spar, and dropped dead. "The post-mortem showed that death was due to malnutrition," says Mason. "The tiger should never have been sent."

His most uncomfortable experience was when the door fell off the cage of a leopard he was unloading from an aeroplane. He picked it up and held it on with his hands, his face only a few inches from that of the leopard. "Would you get me a gun?" he asked the security officer. The security officer streaked off. "And would you bring me some nails and string?" he asked an assistant. Knowing that the gun was on its way, Mason was slightly happier, though he could almost feel the leopard's breath on his face.

After what seemed hours, someone came up from behind. It was his assistant with the repair materials. Gingerly, they patched up the cage. Just as they finished, the security officer came hurrying back. "Do you know," he stammered, "there's not a gun in the place." THE END

THE LITTLE SHADOW

Continued from page 11

outside headquarters by running up the stairs.

Sergeant Abdullah was waiting with a pile of reports, but Chafik said: "I have no time for routine. I have found the key."

"Sir?"

"The hashish matter," Chafik explained impatiently. "Abdullah, if we could fix the day when the crimes begin to mount, the exact day, would it not aid our investigation?"

"Indubitably. A fixed day recurring weekly over a period of several months would permit the narrowing down of means of entry. It would be possible to eliminate certain routes of transportation. For example, sir, highways are sometimes closed by sandstorms."

"Then bring me squared paper."

"Sir?"

"Paper marked with squares. I am going to make a graph. We will plot all crimes committed by hashish addicts during the past three months. Thus the data from our records will emerge visually."

It was tedious work. The clock had struck ten before the last file was closed. Chafik showed his assistant the completed graph. It resembled a mountain range. "What do you observe?" he asked.

"Sir, I observe the parabola of crime begins to rise each Thursday. Then there is a variable peak period of about three days, then a decline."

"What does that mean to you?"

"It proves supplies of hashish are released on that day."

"By what means, Abdullah?"

THE sergeant ventured sarcasm. "Perhaps the graph shows how."

"It does," Chafik said. "Today is Thursday. What transport arrives from foreign parts this day?"

"Sir, solely the international train from Turkey, the Taurus Express. But it is a semi-weekly train. There is another on Sunday."

"Where are your wits?" Chafik asked. "The crimes begin Thursday, their peak declines on Sunday. Therefore this man who smuggles the hashish travels only on Thursdays."

Sergeant Abdullah was critical. "But we search the train."

Chafik again gave attention to the graph. "He has a means of tricking us," he said. He put his finger on the red line where it oddly flattened for a two-week period before leaping to a new high. "What happened here?" he asked.

"Apparently no hashish was available, sir. I remember the period. Many people went to hospital sick through lack of the drug."

The inspector lighted a cigarette, took a few puffs, then stubbed it. He was shaking with excitement, and said, "This graph is clairvoyant. Bring me our lists of Taurus Express passengers for the past three months. Fortunately it is a short train."

They checked the names of regular passengers against the police records, but their work was unrewarded.

Chafik shrugged. "We have eliminated the passengers, but there are others. The Taurus Express is an international train. True, the engine, its crew and the conductors are changed at the frontier, but the day coaches continue to Baghdad. Also one sleeping car and a diner. Read me the names of the staff attendants."

Six men made the midweek run from Istanbul to Baghdad; all were regulars. There was a *chef de train*, a sleeping-car attendant, two cooks and two waiters.

"I think he's come about his wife's insomnia"

While his assistant read the names, the inspector followed the dates on the graph. Suddenly he looked up. "That was a new name," he said.

"Yes, sir. It would appear that Najar Helmy, a waiter, was replaced for the week in question."

"Does Helmy work on the train the following week?"

"No, sir, but he is back the third week."

A little cry of excitement broke from Chafik.

"Sir?"

"Have you forgotten the two-week period when the graph flattens, when no hashish came to Baghdad? Najar Helmy's absence coincides. But is it coincidence that on all other Thursdays when Helmy worked the run the tell-tale line of my graph mounts?"

The sergeant was inarticulate. When he found voice he exclaimed, "Let us go seize this Helmy."

"He who seizes a scorpion in haste repents with haste." Chafik looked at the clock, saw it was nearly train time, and said briskly, "But I confess I am curious to meet this man."

THEY went to the Baghdad North Station and into the office of the railroad police, which commanded a view of the platform. The train had arrived.

Chafik pressed his face to the window, but drew back when a familiar pair of eager eyes met his own. He had forgotten Feisal. The boy's presence was natural, for he had said he would make money from the arrival of the train, but the inspector was annoyed and ignored Feisal's salute.

He waited patiently as the passengers streamed through the exit gate. A detective of the railroad police was at his side and presently said, "There is Helmy. He stands on the steps of the restaurant car, sir."

Najar Helmy was a Turk, short, stocky and olive-skinned.

"You know him?" Chafik asked the detective.

"We are acquainted, sir. He stays overnight at the Parliament Hotel on Hassan Pasha Street."

The station became quiet, a field after battle, littered with cigarette stubs and torn paper. The attendants bustled in and out of the diner and sleeping car, and then Helmy appeared with a rubbish tin.

The Turk held one handle; the other was clutched by Feisal, who used both hands as he strained under the weight of the bin.

Chafik said in a worried voice, "The boy is at ease with this man. He knows him."

Helmy and Feisal disappeared into the yard at the back of the station. When they returned, Helmy the Turk gave the boy money and dismissed him. Soon, the Turk again left the train, submitted a suitcase for inspection and went up the platform towards the yard and the employees' exit.

Sergeant Abdullah said, "This time he is without hashish."

Chafik was puzzled. "But why should he change his routine?"

"Perhaps he was forewarned, sir."

The inspector exclaimed and abruptly left the office. Feisal was squatting on the platform, and Chafik took his arm and pulled him roughly to his feet.

"The man who gave you the money," he said harshly. "You know him?"

"Sahib, my arm," the boy said plaintively, trying to break free. "I did nothing wrong, only helped carry rubbish, as I often do. The man gave me twenty *fils*. A lot of money——"

"What did you say to him? What did you tell him?"

"Nothing, sahib! Nothing—you hurt." Feisal squirmed away, looked up reproachfully and then fled.

The inspector's anger cooled but his face remained grim. He said to Abdullah, "We have been tricked. I think I know how he took out the hashish." He ran up the platform to the station yard.

A rubbish bin stood upside down behind a stack of rusting oil drums. Flies swarmed over the scattered rubbish.

Abdullah began, "Sir——"

Chafik said, "Our heads are of the same density. Who would think of searching that filth? When Helmy went out a few minutes ago, he merely upturned the can and took what was concealed there. That is his regular method—and the boy helped him carry the bin."

The inspector called headquarters, ordered a check, and soon learned Helmy was at his usual hotel. Arrangements were made for a man to register there, for others to be placed strategically throughout the quarter where the hotel was located. Chafik installed himself in a nearby café, ordered coffee and his favourite honey cakes, and waited. But the coffee grew cold and the cakes were untouched; even honey could not sweeten his thoughts.

He looked up and down the street and was silent for some time. Then he said, "There he is!"

"The Turk? I do not observe——" the sergeant began.

"The boy." Chafik darted across the street to an alleyway.

Soon he returned and said harshly to Abdullah, "He escaped me. But how long has he been spying? Has he gone to report to the Turk? Call our man at the hotel."

The sergeant came back to say Feisal had not been seen. "But he is small, he has the ways of a mouse," he added.

"Or the ways of a rat," Chafik said bitterly.

They remained at the café all afternoon. Reports were relayed from the detective in the hotel; Helmy had taken a meal, received no visitors, and was now in his room.

Shortly after sunset, the signal came that the man was leaving, and presently they saw him stroll in the cool of the evening.

Chafik said, "Keep away from me, Abdullah. You are too obvious in uniform." He got up and followed Helmy to another café.

The place was crowded and the inspector sat beside a portly sheik, using the man's bulk to screen his slight figure. Helmy was alone at a table, reading a newspaper.

PRESENTLY a man came in and greeted the Turk effusively. Helmy offered a cigarette and after a few puffs his companion made a gesture of pleasure. The Turk smiled expansively and took a box from his pocket and passed it across the table; his pantomime seemed to say, "You like my cigarettes? Then take this as a gift."

During the next hour the incident was repeated; another stranger received, as a close friend, a gift of two boxes. Chafik saw something pass in return for the cigarettes. When the second man had gone, the Turk also left the café.

He went to a cabaret in the Bab-el-Sheik district. Once again Chafik saw the play of a stranger, a cigarette and a gift. When the stranger left, the inspector signalled an assistant to watch Helmy and joined Sergeant Abdullah outside.

The stranger was still in view and Chafik said briefly, "He has a box of cigarettes I wish to examine."

Abdullah glided into the shadows. Chafik followed slowly; he heard nothing, but when the sergeant reappeared he had the box. Unemotionally he said, "Sir, I took the precaution of silencing him. His skull was thin and the wall hard."

"That may not be a misfortune," Chafik said.

The small oblong box was inscribed with the name of a famous brand of Turkish cigarettes, but inside the sealed foil was a block of brownish-green resinous substance. It had a faint and peculiar odour and Chafik looked at it with intense

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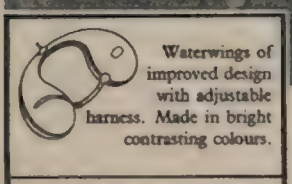
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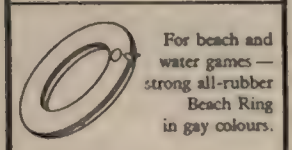
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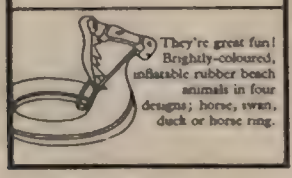
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loathing. "This is where the graph led us," he said.

They returned to the cabaret. Outside was the man Chafik had left to watch the Turk. He said in a worried voice, "Sir, I have lost him."

"What!"

"A man came shortly after you left. He spoke to Helmy and they both went to the cloakroom. When they did not return, I investigated and found an open window."

Chafik's face darkened. "Did a boy speak to Helmy or to this other man?"

"I did not notice, sir."

The inspector called headquarters and ordered a general alarm, then went with Abdullah to Helmy's hotel. The man had not returned. They searched the room and found many boxes of hashish. Chafik said, "He takes only a few with him when he goes to meet the agents. Such a cautious man."

They left men to watch and returned to headquarters.

But Chafik was restless. There was nothing to do now but wait. After some minutes at his desk, he announced to Abdullah that he would go home and rest.

As he left, he said in the familiar hollow voice: "Must I tell Leila about the boy? What can I tell her that will not give pain?"

He walked to his car parked on the landscaped square near a clump of rhododendrons.

As Chafik opened the door of the car, a man rose from the bushes and struck a shrewd blow with a blackjack. Then he bundled the inert inspector into the front seat, got in and drove away.

Two policemen coming up Al-Rashid Street saluted as the familiar car passed. . . .

CHAFIK was in a room, lying on the floor. He opened his eyes. Pain stabbed his head. He saw a man astride a chair, arms folded on the back. Another man came within vision, a squat, barrel-chested man who was doubtless a bodyguard. The man held a leather blackjack.

Helmy said, "Restrain yourself, Ali." And to Chafik he said, almost with apology, "He is like a mastiff."

"I, too, have a faithful henchman." Chafik thought of Sergeant Abdullah, the comfort of those broad shoulders and accurate gun; then he had another thought that was not comforting, and asked, "Is the boy also faithful to you?"

Helmy was puzzled. "What boy?"

"The one who helped with the rubbish."

"I always use a brat to help me; it disarms suspicion. But I don't use any particular boy."

Chafik smiled in relief. "My mind is clear of an unjust suspicion," he said.

Helmy pulled the chair close to the inspector. "I have a proposition," he said conversationally. "You will write a note to cancel my arrest. I will leave on the train tomorrow. And you will go free."

"A simple proposition, I agree. But not practical. Such an order would be questioned by my superiors. Furthermore, I am not in the mood to write such a note."

Ali struck him with the blackjack. Helmy kicked him, then pulled him to his feet. They had him between them, knocking him from side to side; when he fell down they lifted him again and beat him. The next time he went down they left him.

"Well?" Helmy asked.

The inspector tasted blood, screwed up his face in disgust, and said, "This does not help. Your arrest is inevitable."

They did it over again. All Chafik said was: "My work is finished and I am now expendable." He began to recite from the Koran in a high, thin voice. . . .

He did not hear the sound of feet on the stairs, but he revived with the crash of the door. He heard Helmy's oath and the violence of gunfire and somebody familiar who shouted, "Dogs! Devils!" The guns roared again; then, silence and the inspector dared to raise his head.

Near him was the body of the Turk. The other man crouched against the wall, coughing blood. The room was filled with police, among them Sergeant Abdullah.

"Praise to the Merciful One!" exclaimed the sergeant. "If it had not been for the boy——"

"The boy?" Chafik was picking himself up, gingerly.

"Sir, I refer to the waif. He was in the back of your car, apparently waiting for you, hidden on the floor. He saw you struck. With commendable restraint he remained silent while you were driven to this place. Then he ran back, found me at headquarters, and so——"

"Feisal!"

"That is his name, sir. I detained him in your office."

Chafik said humbly, "God works in strange ways." Then he added urgently, "Let us go there quickly."

In his office he stood and looked at Feisal. The boy was asleep in a chair, cheek on his arm, his face smeared with recent tears.

The inspector said, "May I be forgiven!" Then he quoted in excellent English: "I have a little shadow, he goes in and out with me——" After a pause he added, "But the use of him I *do* see."

He went to the telephone, dialled the number and, waiting for his wife to answer, his eyes were tender, but, hearing her voice, he said casually: "I will be with you soon, Leila. I fear I am a little bruised and have ruined good clothes, but it is not important. And I have to announce a decision." He drew himself up and said very firmly, "I have decided to make an adoption."

There was no answer. He rattled the telephone and shouted, "Leila! You hear me, Leila? I am adopting a boy."

The voice of his wife came mildly. "I hear you, my man. All Baghdad hears you. Come quickly. I have had Feisal's room waiting for him these three days, now." THE END

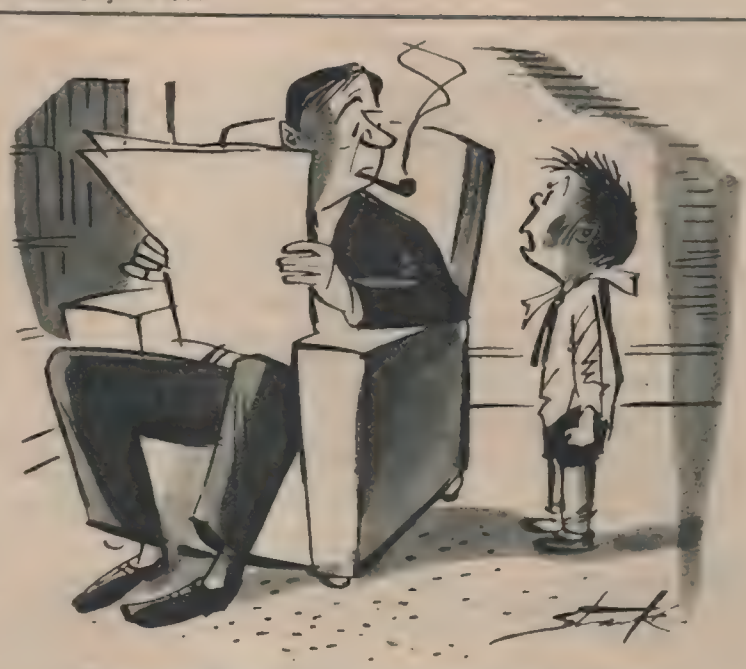
Lady in dispute

Two-part story starts next week

JOHN BULL publishes next week the first part of a new and remarkable story.

Too long for a short story, too short for a novel, *Lady In Dispute*, by Maurice Walsh, is a compelling romantic novelette set in Ireland in the eighteenth century. It is the story of Garodh O'Connor, a wayward, hard-drinking Irishman with the gift of bonesetting, and Jean Stokes, wife of the English garrison commander.

There is a tense operation, a thrilling duel, but it is the unusual, lilting style that makes *Lady In Dispute* a story you will not forget. Don't miss the long first instalment in JOHN BULL next week.



"It's got nothing to do with anyone else if you only give me a paltry sixpence a week. Nobody's going to call *my* dad a mean old skinflint and get away with it"

VENETIAN BIRD

Continued from page 14

across the roofs, spreading out ochre veils of chimney smoke.

Tallius touched his arm and moved forward over the flat roof. He stopped at a little pent and pushed the door open with his foot.

They went down a series of dark, narrow stairs, the sweet smell of planed wood rising stronger to them as they descended, and finally stood in a long workshop on the ground floor. The windows were filthy with dust and the double doors to the yard and canal side were bolted. Down one side of the room was a row of carpenters' benches and on trestles in the middle of the shop stood three newly made, unvarnished, unadorned coffins.

Tallius stopped by the coffins, turned and eyed Mercer up and down, and for the first time spoke. "Five feet ten and a half, and about a hundred and sixty pounds?"

Mercer smiled. "Five ten and about a hundred and fifty-five."

Tallius nodded and slid the top from the centre coffin. He stood back and motioned to Mercer.

"Do I make the journey all the way in this?" The coffin had a fresh, wood smell, sweet and clean.

"There'll only be a couple of screws, top and bottom. You'll get enough air."

Mercer climbed in and lay down. Tallius folded up a sack and put it under his head and then lifted the lid and slid it part way over the coffin. He disappeared for a moment and then came back with a screwdriver and screws.

The coffin top slid over him and he was in darkness. Tallius screwed home the lid.

Half an hour later, a gondola came up the canal and drew into the side of the yard. It was a long, black, funeral gondola, rowed by two men. Its centre was taken up entirely by a palanquin of black velvet curtains hung with black tassels, its four supports crested with stiff sprays of black plumes.

The two men came across and Tallius rose to meet them.

"'*Giorno, padrone.*"

"'*Giorno.*"

He went with them into the workshop and under his directions they lifted the centre coffin and carried it down to the gondola. Straining under its weight, they placed it on the dais of the palanquin and one of them drew the black curtains.

A few moments later, they were rowing down the canal, the black curtains shaking a little in the morning breeze.

The gondola swung across stream and turned into the Rio di San Moise. For a while they worked between the narrow houses, moving right-handed in a ragged circle that brought them eventually to the head of the Bacino Orsento, a dark backwater, hemmed in between hotels and workshops. They drew in against a narrow strip of quay footing the back of a tall building which bore a sign across its middle floor—*Casa Tallius. Pompe Funebri*. The coffin was carried into the building and laid on trestles in a small workshop.

In a few minutes, the lid was raised and Mercer sat up, blinking his eyes against the dim light.

Bernardo was there. He smiled. "With a little imagination you can get some idea of what the real thing will be like."

Mercer got out and brushed himself down. He felt limp, exhausted.

Bernardo went across the workshop and out into the shop. Behind the counter was a small door. Mercer followed him. They went up the stairs to the top floor and turned into a room whose windows were open on to a narrow balcony. On the balcony Bernardo paused, his hands on the iron balustrade. He turned to Mercer. "You're not the first Englishman who's used this route. . . . I've seen a general scramble along there like a roof cat."

They were facing a little triangle of roofs, a sharp valley, blocked at one end by the blank upsweep of a wall. On the far slope of tiles was a small gable. Standing there Mercer was reminded of the view from Adriana's flat. . . . The same kind of balcony, the same steep roof scarps and the same scaly pattern of weathered, moss-marked tiles.

Bernardo raised a foot and began to clamber over the rail. Mercer, preparing to follow him, noticed the tell-tale scratches on the top of the rail. They were old now, but he would leave his own marks, bright scars against the dead green paint. . . . He followed Bernardo down the slope of

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WHITER

the roof. There were no windows overlooking this little valley, except the one they had left and the gable to which they worked their way Bernardo slipped slightly on the tiles and Mercer saw that a great many of them were broken and cracked.

In a few seconds they were through the gable window and standing in a narrow room which held a truckle bed, a small bookcase, a table, and a sink with a glass-fronted tin cabinet over it.

Bernardo closed the window carefully. "You can wash and shave. Everything you want is in the cabinet. Smoke if you like, but don't move about too much. There are families on the lower floors Lock the door after me when I go and don't open it again unless it's knocked like this." He tapped the table in a three-one knock.

"Right. How long do I stay here?" Mercer lit a cigarette and moved to the window, looking back across the roof trail.

"That depends on other people. Maybe until tonight, or tomorrow night. I'll see you get food."

Mercer turned back to him

"What did the morning bulletin say . . . about him, I mean?"

"He can't be expected to last. His priest is with him"

"I didn't do it, you know."

"Stay in this room. An angry crowd won't stop to argue with you."

Bernardo began to move towards the door. "Lock it after me. There's wine behind the bookcase. I'll be back in an hour with some food"

WHEN he was gone Mercer went to the sink and washed and shaved himself. Afterwards, he went to the bookcase for a bottle of wine, and sat by the window in a warm angle of sunlight

Where would the trail end, he wondered? Men had long memories, and memory backed by rancour lasted longest. There would be photographs of him plastered over Italy. Any man or woman who had loved Nervi, respected the politician or praised the poet, would hold the assassin's face in memory easily

What defence had he got? Only truth, the truth in him which Spadoni would not accept. The truth which only he could establish by producing Uccello. Produce him and Spadoni would make him talk

A pigeon swooped down into the roof valley and paraded with aldermanic pomposity across the tiles, pecking now and again at the loose mortar. He watched it, his mind tired and confused. . . Then, suddenly, the thought and memory bringing a wild exhilaration to him, he remembered how he had stood on Adriana's loggia, looking out at the roof. He remembered the bright scores on the railing beneath his hands, the broken line of tiles and the tiny tufts of green and yellow moss and, fifteen yards from the loggia rail, the pent of a small gable. . .

Someone had passed across that roof to her loggia often enough to leave a trail.

He remembered Adriana telling him how she and Uccello met secretly, remembered the count saying that after Uccello's work was done he would hide up for a few days before he left the country. Uccello would be going off soon by himself. It was natural that he would hide near Adriana, spend all the time he could with her before he left. . .

Bernardo knocked on the door. He crossed and let him in, hardly conscious of him. Bernardo dropped a parcel of food on the table.

"I'll be back this evening with some clothes for you. Things are bad. . . ."

Mercer saw his face then, became aware of him and knew that the man was frightened. He said slowly, "It's happened?"

Bernardo nodded. "He's dead Two hours ago. The place is swarming with police. There's been a free fight in the Chamber of Deputies—every party claims the other had a hand in it for dirty reasons, to stir up trouble and take power. If the Government lasts a week it'll be a miracle. By tomorrow there'll be riots and strikes. . . . *Povera Italia*"

"And after that?"

"Then the people who started all this—your friend Boria—will walk in with the interested sections of the Army and Navy, and we shall have Fascism again—only it'll have a different name"

Mercer moved impatiently. "Why the devil didn't Spadoni take a chance on my story and get to work on Boria!"

"Because he's a policeman, because your story didn't even begin to sound true. Boria's too influential a man for the police to tamper with unless they have some clear evidence. . ."

"If they had Uccello—knew there was such a man living—then they'd have something and there'd be a chance to stop the trouble"

"Yes. Give them a reason to jump on Boria and they'd make him talk. They'd pull everything into the open . . . the various political parties would see the design behind this affair, and the Government would clamp down on the Army and Navy people who want this trouble before it comes to a head. But time is running out. . . "

"If only I could get my hands on Uccello. . "

"You look after yourself. There's nothing you can do." Bernardo helped himself to a glass of wine and drank it nervously

Mercer turned towards the window, watching the sun on the roof. "You know where Signorina Adriana Medova lives?"

"Yes. Why?" He could hear the slight surprise in the man's voice.

"I want to know who owns, rents or lives in the house on the right of her block."

"Why?"

"I'd like to know." Mercer turned and faced him. For a moment he thought Bernardo was going to argue, but the man slowly shrugged his shoulders.

"I'll be back as soon as I can with the clothes," he said, and went out

It was just growing dark when

THE HUMAN MACHINE

On impulse

IMPULSE is an unsafe guide to action. It so often starts something you can't finish; something you immediately regret; something that turns out differently from your hopes.

It's easy to excuse it as consideration for others' feelings. But too often the old defence, "I didn't think," has to be put up when the almost inevitable unpleasantness ensues. The only possible answer is, "You should have thought." That's what your brains are for.

by ROFFE THOMPSON

Bernardo returned again. Opening a parcel he had brought with him, he tossed across the bed a shabby blue suit, a light raincoat and a wide-brimmed Italian felt hat.

"Change into these. There's money in the suit pocket. You'll be moving out first thing tomorrow morning. You know where the steamer pier is for Chioggia?"

"Yes. Just beyond the Danielli."

"That's it."

"How far is that from here?"

"This house backs on the Bacino Orsento, not a long way from San Marco. But don't worry how you'll get there. I'll tell you everything in the morning. If you make this stage the rest should be easy." He moved towards the door. Mercer went over with him and reached for the handle.

"Did you find out what I asked you?"

"Yes. The house next to hers is a furniture depository owned by Boria. Take my advice and forget whatever you're thinking about. . . ."

But lying on the bed after Bernardo had gone, he went on thinking about it. If he did get his hands on Uccello. . . . It meant going out into the streets on a long chance. If he were recognized, the crowd would take him and, instead of a future of quiet misery, he would have the sharp agony of a vivid few minutes during which hate would use his body. . . . No, he couldn't do it. It was safer to follow Bernardo in the morning and make what he could of the future. . . .

He went over to the table and poured the last of the wine. He drank it slowly.

HE was dressed in the blue suit and in the shadowed room behind him the raincoat and hat lay on the table. He picked up the coat and slipped it on. Hat in his hand, he went to the door and felt for the key. Then, with an urgent clumsiness, he opened the door and was outside, cramming the hat down over his forehead as he went downstairs.

Before he had gone ten yards, he was aware of the change in this city. He had the impression that the whole town was abroad, restless, prowling through the dark labyrinth of alleys and passages. The noise and movement of them were a menace. He could not prevent himself from gripping the butt of the revolver in his pocket fiercely. He went down the street, his legs stiff and awkward as he fought to stroll as they did, and he kept his head lowered, watching their legs under the brim of his hat. The darkness of an archway closed over him and he paused.

Beyond the archway and in the light, he looked quickly up at the name of the street to get his bearings. As his head came down, a face smiled at him from the wall beside a shop window. He stood there, stupid. It was his own face. Above it in thick black letters were the words—AVETE VISTO QUESTO UOMO? *Have you seen this man?* There it was, his own face, smiling, puffed-up and coarse from enlargement. They must have got a photograph from somewhere.

A man and a woman pushed at him from behind and he heard the woman's voice, fat and angry and hoarse with the accent of slums, "I'd do a better job on him than the police will. I'd pull him to pieces and miss nothing." She stepped forward and spat at the poster.

He moved away quickly, threading his way through the people who moved along the narrow channel of the street. He felt his heart pounding, his fingers crushing against the

OH, JOHNNY! *by TIM*

diamond-scored pattern on the wood of his revolver butt, and he was fighting down the impulse to turn and go swiftly to the safety of his room. But he went on.

At the end of the street, a flight of steps rose to a small bridge over a canal. He went up them, dropped down the other side of the bridge and began to cross a small square. It was darker here and there were fewer people about. He walked a little quicker now. He had taken his bearings and knew the way he must go.

He turned the corner of the square. Standing against the wall five yards ahead of him was a carabiniere. He stood there with his thumbs tucked into his belt, his carbine slung over his shoulder, watching the thin trickle of passers. Mercer hesitated. To turn back abruptly might attract the man's attention. He forced himself to go on, drawing out his steps with a casual movement which was all agony. He held his head down and, as he neared the man, raised a hand and stroked his chin as though, walking, he pondered some thought, his hand masking the lower part of his face. He saw the drab uniform, a bilious green in the street lights, and the worn leather belt. Then he was by.

TEN yards beyond him, he had the feeling that the carabiniere must be following him. He wanted to know, but dared not risk the danger of turning to see. A flood of light from the end of the street beckoned him and he fought with his desire as he moved towards it. The light came from behind a great wooden trellis of arches thrown across an empty space between the houses. Through the trellis, twined with artificial creepers and starred with great coloured paper-flowers and painted electric light bulbs, he saw the movement of waiters and an idle drift of dancers tracing a slow pattern in the space between the tables.

He halted and looked up at the notice over the main arch—*Pista da Ballo*. With a slight turn of his head, he glanced back along the street. The carabiniere was coming towards him with slow, ponderous steps, his face as round and bland as a moon-struck yokel.

Mercer went into the garden and sat down at a table which gave him a view of the entrance, a table drawn back in the shadow of a streamer-hung alcove. A spotlight with revolving discs threw a kaleidoscope of colour over the dancers.

"Signor?" It was the waiter.

"Cognac," he said, and the sound of his own voice suddenly seemed unnecessarily loud and strange. Two young girls who had been dancing together came to the table and settled opposite him, reaching out for their glasses which he had not noticed. They gave him a quick look and then ignored him as they chattered together.

Over their heads, he saw the carabiniere standing at the arched entrance. The man's eyes went round the place, on his face a placid smile, paternal, approving, no trace of regret in it for this pleasure which belonged to others while he worked. One of the girls gave a high laugh and, momentarily, the carabiniere's attention was held by them. Mercer dropped his eyes to the table, holding his knees under cover of the cloth to stop his hands shaking.

The waiter's shadow darkened the table and a glass was put before him. He drew out a note for the man and waved away the change. He drank slowly. When he looked again, the carabiniere was gone. He got up and went to the entrance, skirting the floor, his head down watching the changing mosaic of colour on the concrete.

There was no sign of the carabiniere in the street. Halfway down it, a knot of people broke past him and went up the broad steps of a cinema portico. He hurried on.

As he did so, a young man in a raincoat who had been examining the framed photographs in the lobby of the cinema turned sharply, threw away his cigarette and moved up the street after him.

In a little while, Mercer was passing the crowded front of the post office behind the Piazza San Marco. He turned a corner and the doorway of Adriana's apartment house was twelve yards from him. He moved along the wall, loafing. The doorway before hers was a tall, double-leaved affair with a small inset door. He leaned against it, his hand behind him trying the handle. It was locked. He stood there, undecided. The evening crowd drifted by him.

The only windows were high up and heavily barred. Something like panic began to grow in him. He should have thought of this. He had risked the danger of the streets, all his mind concentrated on that, only to find he was unable to get into the depository.

He found himself outside the entrance to Adriana's apartment house. By going up to her flat, he thought suddenly, he could reach the depository. But what about her? Once she saw him she would ring for the police. . . . He would have to deal with her, use force. . . . It had to be done. He was desperate. He stood there undecided.

Round the open door of a radio shop, a knot of people listened to a bulletin. It blared at him, seeming to reach out over their heads in some inanimate spleen. . . . "*A statement from the Ministry of the Interior this evening indicates that the assassin, Edoardo Mercer, is still in Venice. Within the next twenty-four hours the police are confident that he will be found. The Prime Minister has issued the following appeal for calmness on the part of all sections of the public. . . .*"

He escaped from it through the doorway of the apartment house. There was only one way left for him to reach Uccello—through her flat. He went up the stairs. With each step he took, he heard the thudding of his heart, felt the itch of sweat between his neck and collar and a cold sensation of apprehension turn in his stomach.

He stood outside Adriana's door for a while letting his breath even down and very deliberately he wiped his hands free of sweat against his coat. He pressed his thumb against the bell push.

He heard it ring within the flat and his hand dropped loosely to his side.

The door opened and he saw her against the light. The silk of her black skirt swung gently in the door draught and across her dark hair ran a smooth band of reflected light. He took off his hat and saw surprise sweep across the long, oval face, saw the warm lips half-parted to speak, but before she could say anything he had stepped by her and shut the door.

ADRIANA moved backwards into the room. "You. . . ." Her voice was a whisper, low and accusing. He was a ghost who had walked into the room, the visible memory of a man for whom her original feeling of liking and pity had gone, leaving only loathing for his last monstrous act.

"Yes, me."

She held herself taut. "What are you doing here? What do you want?"

He heard the hurried tones of alarm in her voice.

"I want nothing from you."

She went to the mantelshelf, watching him over her shoulder. She had gone very pale, but he saw she was making an effort to regain her courage.

He said deliberately: "Uccello shot Nervi. *He's* the one who's going to help me."

He saw her look towards the telephone that stood on a small table near the door. Crossing to it, he jerked the flex free of the wall attachment.

"You must know I wouldn't be here unless I were desperate. If you try to give any warning I shall know what to do."

In turn he went to the doors of the other rooms and looked in. There was no one else in the flat. Now he was here, and they were alone, his urgency died, leaving a curiosity about her still and a faint reluctance to move on yet across the roofs to the furniture repository.

"I'm not asking you to help me," he said, provoked by her silence. "I know where he is."

"Nobody can help you. You

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know that." She turned away from him, her face tight-lipped, angry, and walked towards the open windows. He followed her.

"Uccello shot Nervi." He put a hand up to her shoulder to twist her round, but she shook herself free and went to the balcony rail and stood there, her back to him.

"It's a lie."

"Why keep that up now?" He stood beside her. "Uccello shot Nervi, and you know it's true. For God's sake, let's be reasonable. . . . I wouldn't be here unless it was the truth!"

Adriana turned towards him. His face was bone-white in the moonlight, his bitterness marked in taut lines giving it an ugly, pathetic quality, and against the stubborn loyalty in her for another man she felt the swift movement of pity and tenderness which this man so easily evoked in her. But she fought against it.

"I know him and I love him. He could never have shot Nervi."

"You know me a little, too," he said quietly. "Do you think I could have shot Nervi?"

She moistened her lips. Her voice, when it came, was almost a whisper. "Yes, I know you did it. . . . I know you've done this kind of thing before."

He knew that she meant it, that she believed him an assassin. For a moment the anger in him almost drove him to reach out for her, to shake her free of the falseness which surrounded her. But his impulse died before a sweep of sharp understanding and a curious relief. He had been wrong about her then. She hadn't known all that went on. Even now, the full truth about Uccello was hidden from her. The bitterness he had cherished against her was undeserved. She had been as much victim as he.

"They fooled you," he cried, "just as they fooled me!"

The silhouette of her face was hard, unmoving against the light from the room behind them.

"The moment you leave here, I am going to warn the police. Nervi was a good man. I hate you for what you've done." Her voice was low, the uncertain whisper of a lost child. He walked over to the window. His knuckles were white as he grasped the iron. They were both caught: only Uccello could release them. He saw the bright scores of scratch marks on the paint. . . .

THE door of the flat burst open suddenly, slamming back against the wall. Mercer and Adriana turned, startled. Spadoni, a revolver in his hand, came swiftly across the room. Behind him were two policemen holding short rifles.

"Stand aside, signorina." He made a brusque motion with the revolver, and Adriana moved away from Mercer.

Mercer and Spadoni faced one another.

"You were lucky, signor, that it was a carabiniere who recognized you on the street. Anyone else would have started a riot. You were unlucky not to realize that he had a plain clothes man with him. Just raise your hands above your head and keep them there."

Mercer raised his arms. "There's a revolver in my right-hand pocket," he said dully. Spadoni nodded to one of the policemen. The man searched him, stepping back with the revolver. "You were wise not to try and use it," Spadoni said curtly. "There's a gondola waiting opposite the house door. You've got three yards of open street to cross, signor. Try not to excite attention otherwise I cannot guarantee your safety."

"Before we go"—Mercer was watching Adriana as he spoke—"you remember that you promised me if I could put my hands on Uccello for you, you might believe my story and would take a chance on Boria?"

"I do, signor."

"He's within twenty yards of us now. I can lead you to him." He saw Adriana's hand go up to her breast and a spasm of alarm pass across her face and he knew he was right.

Spadoni hesitated, and Mercer drove home his advantage. "If you don't do it now, you'll never get him. You can walk behind me with a gun at my back. . . ."

Spadoni was silent for a moment. Then he nodded. "*Bene*. But at the first sign of stupidity. . . ." He raised the revolver significantly.

"Through that gable over there." Mercer pointed along the roof and then began to climb the balcony rail. The two policemen covered him with their rifles as Spadoni clambered over, and then they followed.

Leaning on one hand, Mercer went down across the tiles, feeling the broken pieces slip under his feet. He waited in the gutter between the roofs and Spadoni came up behind him. Feeling the touch of the revolver against his back, Mercer began carefully to climb towards the gable.

The window of the gable was open and the room was dark within, except for a thin line of dim light from under a far door. Spadoni put a hand on his shoulder, holding him back. A policeman took his arm and Spadoni climbed through first. Mercer followed.

They went silently across to the door, threading their way through piled up furniture and crates. Spadoni put his hand on the door and opened it quickly, his revolver raised. He stepped through and Mercer followed him.

It was a long room, cut on one side by three evenly spaced windows

NOW YOU KNOW

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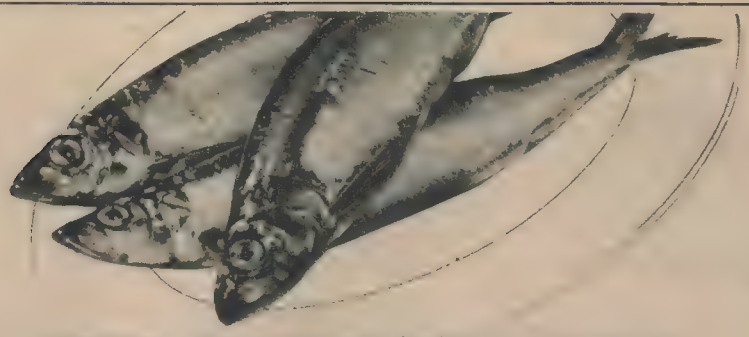

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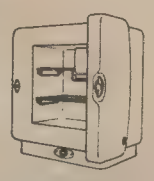

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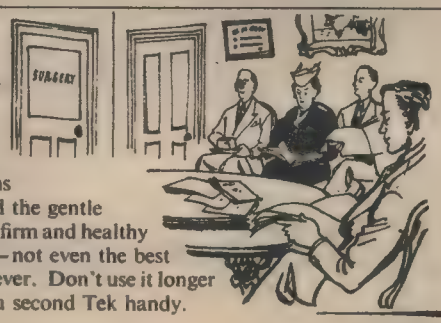

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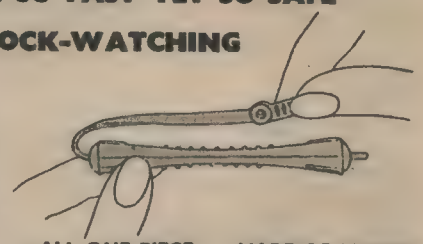

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which looked out on the Piazza San Marco. At the far end, near the window, a man lay on a canopied four-poster bed. A small reading lamp threw a pool of red light over the bed and the brocaded folds of the cover were puddled with deep crimson shadows. As they entered and stood there, the man sat up, his body twisting towards them. He wore a loose white shirt and dark trousers.

"Cassana. . . ."

Mercer heard Spadoni's voice, knew that the man had turned from Cassana to look at him, but for the moment his surprise held him. Cassana . . . so this was the man. And as surprise died slowly, he began to understand so many things. Uccello, Paolo Cerva, Cassana, thief, genius, partisan, traitor, hero—and assassin. All this, and more—a laughing, attractive, quick-witted, mercurial nature which had nearly destroyed him and had held Adriana bound. Yes, he could see now, this was a man who could hold a woman.

He span round on Spadoni quickly—"This isn't Cassana. This is Uccello!"

Cassana slid to the edge of the bed and looked at them curiously. "What is all this, chief?" There was no trace of alarm in his voice.

Spadoni moved his large body uneasily. "What are you doing here, Cassana? I thought you were in Turin?"

Cassana shrugged his shoulders. "I got back this evening. It was all a false alarm."

"What's he doing here?" Mercer's voice was hard, and as he spoke, he went to a low table that stood at the foot of the bed. On it was a large suitcase.

Cassana stood up. "That's the Englishman who killed Nervi! What is——"

WITH a wave of his hand, Spadoni interrupted him. "Never mind that. He says you are Gian Uccello. What are you doing here?"

"I know the caretaker of this place. I'm spending the evening with him. He's out getting some drink. Uccello?" He laughed and shook his head, puzzled.

"Yes, Uccello!" Mercer cried angrily. He had raised the lid of the suitcase. He saw Cassana's lips tighten. "Don't let him fool you, Spadoni. There's no caretaker to this place. He's here hiding up before he leaves the country. Look—a passport with his photograph but another name, a framed photograph of Adriana Medova, and a bunch of steamship tickets for the *Segovia*—she's lying off the Danielli now. . . ." As he spoke, he tossed the items from the case on to the bed.

"Let me see those." Spadoni moved forward, his large body surprisingly alert, his voice harsh.

Mercer let the lid of the case drop. "He's Uccello. He's the man who killed Nervi!" And as he spoke, he saw from Cassana's face that the man realized he was caught.

"Look out!" One of the carabinieri shouted suddenly.

Uccello swung away from the bed and reached for the little table. Mercer was thrust sideways as Spadoni dropped the passport and moved forward. The room echoed with the contained thunder of a shot as Uccello's hand came up and he fired. Spadoni's arm jerked and his own revolver dropped from his hand as Uccello's bullet grazed his wrist.

Uccello turned and with a swing of his arm sent the lamp crashing from the table. The flame of a rifle shot seared Mercer's face as a policeman fired. There was a crashing of glass as Uccello flung himself through the window.

Mercer picked up Spadoni's revolver from the floor and raced forward. He was through the shattered window before the others and found himself standing in the wide parapeted way which ran around the great façade of the square. He saw the white movement of Uccello's shirt ahead of him and went after him.

Uccello reached the top corner of the runway and faced about. Mercer flung himself sideways and the hard stone of the parapet drove into his side. The bullet whined past him, hit the roof and ricochetted into the night.

He pulled himself up, and for a moment he saw the white stippling of faces far down below on the piazza, the hard gloss of coloured table tops and the great spread of coloured lights which seemed to fuse and swirl against his eyes. Then with a great roar of wings and in a rush of alarm, the pigeons came up from the pavements, sweeping by him in a sibilant vortex.

He heard the others shout behind him as he turned the far corner. Uccello was halfway along the top side of the square when he saw him trip over a ridge of leaded pipe. The man sprawled flat on the leads and the shock of his falling body came clearly to Mercer.

He followed him, careless of the stone projections that tore at him, hearing the hollow thud of his feet on the runway, conscious not only of the white-shirted figure that rose and fell before him, but aware, too, of the crowd down in the square which now stirred and shouted, releasing angry bursts of voices that swept up into the moon-pale night.

He saw the man stop at a windowed pent and throw himself against it, seeking a way down from the roof. He kicked at the window until Mercer was only twenty yards from him and then swung away and ran on, lost for a while in the dark shadow of the great campanile towering from the square.

Mercer plunged through the shadow and was out in the brilliance of lights that came back from the front of the Basilica of San Marco and the pale cream run of the Ducal Palace. Leaping the breaks in the runway where short walls swept down between the roofs, he saw beyond Uccello the black spread of the great lagoon and, towering above it, the white, light-spangled bulk of the liner anchored in the fairway, and he knew that there was no farther the man could go. They had come round the sweep of the square and were now on the short leg that ended above the wide quayside. Cutting across the run of roofs rose a wall about eight feet high and beyond it a drop to the spread tables of a café. He saw Uccello make a jump for the top of the wall and fall back. The man turned and stood waiting for him, and as he came on Uccello raised his revolver and fired. Two shots.

The first drew sparks from the stone pediment of the roof. The second smashed into the tiles at Mercer's left hand and the splinters bit into his cheek and hand. He came on, careless with anger, as Uccello leaped on to the balustrade. Uccello turned sideways and fired. The bullet tore through the cloth of his shoulder and Mercer felt himself swung sideways.

STAGGERING, he flung himself forward and reached out for the man's legs. A foot smashed against his neck and he went backwards, pulling Uccello with him. They fell together in the wide gutter, and rolled there, panting, twisting, the frenzy of their struggle a dark confusion of striking arms and legs. A lean pair of hands clamped Mercer's throat and he felt the tortured heave of his lungs fighting for air. He struck at the shadowed face above him and a violent pain soared savagely through his wounded shoulder. The fingers about his throat tightened and he felt the laboured breath of Uccello hot across his face. Drawing strength from his agony, he jerked up his leg and drove his knee into the softness of the other's body.

Uccello rolled over, then rose, swaying, his hands pressed against the pain in his body. Mercer saw him struggle to the parapet, a black figure against the light-flooded sky. He saw the arms raised in a ragged, unsteady supplication as the man reached for the top of the wall. He rolled over, seeking to follow him, and as he pulled himself up he heard the thud of a bullet against bone and flesh, saw the man's arms swing in a wild balance for a moment. Then Uccello dropped away out of sight. A carabiniere raced past him, his rifle still half raised, and peered over the balustrade.

An age afterwards, it seemed, he was leaning over the wide stone parapet, looking down. A ring of carabinieri was holding back a crowd, a dozen café tables stood empty, red and yellow discs against the dark pavement, and one of them was crushed and twisted. By it, contorted in an ugly sprawl of limbs, lay the body of a man in a white shirt and dark trousers. A carabiniere rose from beside the body and stood undecided for a moment, then his eyes turned upwards.

Spadoni, at Mercer's side, leaned out and, seeing him, the carabiniere moved his hand gently in a negative gesture over the body. A waiter came out from under the arcade and Mercer watched him drape a dark cloth about the still figure.

Mercer drew back and the movement made him unsteady. Spadoni's hand held him, and the man said abstractedly: "We must get someone to look at your shoulder, signor."

"There are a lot of other things to take care of, too."

Spadoni nodded, quickly, nervously, already thinking about it. "Yes, yes. An immediate broadcast. The assassin has been caught. . . . The people must be calmed first. Then Boria, the men with him. . . . Thank God there is still time."

MERCER turned away. Beyond Spadoni, her back to the parapet, Adriana was standing. He went slowly towards her. Her face was pale, immobile, and she looked straight ahead of her, her eyes still and shadowed with despair. He knew that in this moment there was nothing he could say or do which would give her life. He put out a hand and touched her.

She moved like a sleep-walker, turning away, stepping over the stone ridges of the guttering with the care and abstraction of one passing from the dark corridors of a dream.

He followed her, the movement of his body pulling against the torn muscles of his shoulder, sending long fingers of pain through him. To his right the golden horses on the Basilica of San Marco reared towards the sky.

They came to the turn in the parapet. He saw Adriana stop. Her face came round to him, touched by the wash of coloured lights, and for him it was the face of one who wakes from a dark dream.

As he drew level, she grasped his arm. Her lips moved, but he could not hear what she was saying. He put his lips close to her ear. "There is nothing you need say, Adriana . . . nothing."

She looked at him for a moment, and tears stood bright in her eyes. He put his arm round her, and her head fell on his shoulder. They stood like that for a while, and then he urged her gently on. He could feel her sobbing as they moved along together. But the sobbing and the tears would go. They were the last bitter dregs of an unhappy time. As he helped Adriana in through the window, Mercer felt his heart, heavy for so long, singing.

THE END

"Oh dear, did I use the sports page again?"

"Venetian Bird" by Victor Canning will be published in book form next week by Hodder & Stoughton at 10s. 6d. Film rights have been secured by Betty Box

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SURGEONS AND DOCTORS USE IT

JB

"And don't sit there making fists at me in your pockets"

MILD-AND-BITTER BARNSTORMERS

Continued from page 9

two or three discreet posters. There is no charge for admission but tickets are sometimes issued to limit the audience in accordance with local fire regulations.

On the night of the performance, McCarthy and the rest of the company arrive in a motor coach with costumes, simple lights, a portable switchboard, half a dozen folding screens and a gramophone with folding turntable for background music and effects. Furniture is borrowed on the spot. Everyone helps to fix up the screen as wings and back-cloth, then hurries off to change in an improvised dressing-room.

Improvisation is the Taverners' stock-in-trade. The stage may be a space cleared at the end of a bar-parlour, a raised platform in a modern concert room or a strip of grass in a pub garden. It was so shaky at the first night of *Hamlet* that the screens danced up and down like puppets during the fight scene and actors waiting to go on took turns in holding them down. *They Came to a City* needs a door on the stage but when this was a mere platform across one corner of a public bar and the only door was half-way down the adjacent wall, the action had to take place all along that side of the room. Patrons passing in and out of the door mingled with actors, and the ticket collector stood guard all night at the back of the "stage."

Audience Invaded Stage

A hole in the stage, which had to be covered by a chest, was needed for *The Duke in Darkness*. McCarthy, as duke, had later to remove the chest. Soon the room was packed and eventually people overflowed on to the stage itself, one man actually leaning on the chest. When the time came for McCarthy to move it, he merely went up to the intruder, said, "Excuse me, old man" in a quiet voice and carried on. "Funnily enough, no one laughed," says Audrey Bowker, the thirty-five year old infants teacher who, as stage manager of the Taverners has six months' leave of absence for the Festival tours.

Once, when McCarthy accidentally knocked a glass off a table and smashed it, one of the public-house waiters stepped on to the stage with dustpan and brush and swept up the bits. When the action of a play required a letter to be dropped on the stage, one of the audience stepped forward, picked it up and returned it to the embarrassed actor.

Perhaps the most harassing performance was the opening night of *Othello* which a newsreel team attended. When the chief cameraman asked if he could use his lights, McCarthy told him to go steady. "That's all right," said the cameraman, "give me a copy of the script marked in the places most convenient for you." McCarthy did. It was, however, totally disregarded by the cameraman, who blistered the actors with 12,000 watts of white light throughout the performance, the only relief being when he turned it on the audience. To make matters worse, five photographers stationed at the back of the stage knocked down all the screens. "Iago's groping about with a lantern and Othello's 'Put out the light' speech sounded almost ironical," says Audrey.

Silencing The Children

Often the Taverners are so close to their audience that the front row draws back during a stage fight. McCarthy likes this intimacy, which, he says, makes the audience a part of the play.

Finding that the children were noisy during a performance of *Twelfth Night* in the hop fields of Kent, he stopped the play and had them brought to the front. Some of them sat on the sides of the stage, others leaned against it with their elbows on the boards, and one or two tried to climb the poles that supported the lights. When McCarthy, dressed as Malvolio in black beard, ruff collar, yellow stockings and red cross-garters, came to the front, an urchin leaned forward and pinched his leg. "Mum," he shouted, "'e's real."

McCarthy likes to drink with the audience during the intervals. "It never destroys the illusion," he says. "Patrons of regular Taverner pubs know the company by their Christian names and make inquiries if a favourite is missing. Some audiences make a point of coming half an hour early to help fit up the stage. "They love to see 'the works.' When we 'strike,' they help us again."

Such close interest can be an embarrassment on occasions. When the Taverners produced *Poison Pen*, they painted grey vaulted arches on

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By courtesy of Pathé Pictorial

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2

The quick, easy way that blades are changed. *Blades are* spring-suspended *in the Zipak — a flick of the thumb puts them straight into your razor, unwrapped, untouched, and ready for instant use.*

3

Discarded blades go in the Zipak's convenient underside compartment. *Makeshift arrangements for getting rid of old blades are a thing of the past. And Zipak is a* safety *precaution— particularly with children in the house.*

4

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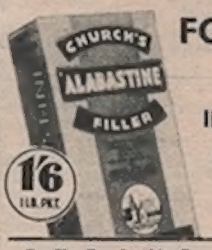

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The joy of a glorious, free seaside week can still be *yours*—by making this week's £500 *Bullet*. And with your prize, as with the other chief cheques, go the last 1951 holiday opportunities. They're novel 3-in-1 awards—fares, accommodation and a camera to record your *Bullets* holiday.

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RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, dated August 25 and in JOHN BULL, dated September 1, also Editor' decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

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The British Lion
Remember Korea And
Without War
Cruelty To Children
Missing Man
Fruits Of Education
Humdrum Existence
An Old Song
Melted
Walls Have Ears, So
All Colours
Wrecked The Romance
Nobody's Business
Quids In
Packing His Bags
Pompously
At Auntie's Nursing Home
A Bit Ticklish
Fretting And Fuming
In The Back Row

Incomplete "Examples"—see instructions

.....We Live In
Question Of.....
.....Apart
Cute Little.....
Somebody....., Then
If .....Had Her Way

NOTE.—You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "Combined," top left-hand corner.

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,794 (or Xword 746), "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

"I follow *'Bullets' Bulletin* closely each week, reading every bit of its good advice," comments £500 winner Mrs. F. Hicks, Hurdon Way, Launceston, Cornwall. That budget of help for "Bulleteers" can also reach you every Thursday—use the Application Coupon below.

Continued from next column

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£10: Mrs. E. Gatward, 125 Powys Lane, Palmers Green, N.13: SYMBOL OF HER—LOVE, HER *Ringless* FINGER? £10: F. C. Radford, 19 The Coombes, Bramley, Guildford: STAGGERED THE TOURIST—"YOU THERE! QUEUE HERE!" £5: A. B. Clare, 20 Kirkmoor Road, Clitheroe, Lancs: STAGGERED THE TOURIST—"*Falstaff* ONCE ATE HERE!" £5: B. Creaghan, 98 Ferham Road, Rotherham, Yorks: THE SERGEANT-MAJOR — PASSED, STOPPED — PASS STOPPED! £5: Mrs. K. Marks, 58 Randolph Drive, Clarkston, Glasgow: ADVENTUROUS YOUTH—CHANGED JOBS—*Pension* HIGHER! £5: Mrs. M. Turnbull, 11 Leithen Road, Innerleithen, Peeblesshire: PRESENT FOR MOTHER—"MELTED" AT ICE-CREAM

Continued in previous column

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Across Clues **XWORD 746**

1. It's easy to see the relationship between this and drink
2. When a row starts, cowardly chap goes in this
4. It means more to mother of large family than to average person
6. Lorry driver has good reason if he turns down shady one
10. Forecasters are by no means always right in telling us whether it is going to be cold or
12. Commonly an indication of disapproval
13. You can't always judge a friend's beliefs by his
14. Sometimes it is amazing how much one can do

Down Clues

1. It has some value, but you can easily pay too much for it
3. One regards this as being heavy
5. Cynic may declare he can tell a man is this from his looks
7. Nobody likes to be given this when sleepy and on point of going to bed
8. One has got to be precise when shooting this
9. May be a big hit—or pass almost unnoticed
11. One doesn't often go for long in precisely the same direction

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XWORD 741 RESULT

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1, Names. 5, Writer. 10, Judged. 11, Feat. 13, Cube. 14, Tug. 15, Better. DOWN: 2, March. 3, Tin. 4, Dread. 6, Beg. 7, Cage. 8, Rule. 9, Tee. 12, Fear.

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the screen to give the effect of a vestry. Four months later, the arches were filled in with crimson and decorated with fleur-de-lys for a room supposed to be at the top of a castle. "We thought we'd done well," says Audrey. At the first performance, however, an old woman was heard saying to her companion: "They've used the same screens as they had in *Poison Pen*."

The Taverners are an offshoot of "a committee for verse and prose recitation" known as Poetry and Plays in Pubs, which was founded in 1937 on the suggestion of J. B. Atkins, a London journalist. Members of the committee, better known as "V. and P.," include the Poet Laureate, Louis Macneice, Sir Ernest Barker, Dame Sybil Thorndyke and a brace of bishops. "It's an ideal committee," says McCarthy, "it has only met once." Since the beginning, "V. and P" has been financed by a trust fund to which every brewer in England contributes.

In 1938 McCarthy and a score of others answered an advertisement for "enthusiastic amateur actors to play under peculiar circumstances"—and the Taverners came into being. When war broke out, McCarthy left his job in the accounts department of a brewery and became a policeman. The Taverners continued playing pubs up to the middle of the blitz, but switched then to gun sites, small Civil Defence units and other organizations too small for Ensa's notice. The trust fund kept them out of difficulties.

Plays In Every Company

They returned to the pubs in 1946. When John Holgate, the original organizer, took a post as Professor of Drama at the Guildhall School of Music, McCarthy was chosen to succeed him.

Since then he has been in absolute control. "No one can tell me how to do the job because I'm the only one who knows how." As organizer, he works in his Westminster office from eleven each morning. As actor, he plays in every company, rarely getting home before midnight. His salary is paid out of the trust fund.

Normally the Taverners are about fifty strong and form two companies who put on three plays each in three ten-week seasons at pubs within forty miles of London. Each company works alternately two or three nights a week, excluding weekends, making two dozen performances for each play. Each house is visited six times a year with a different play each time. A coach with the company leaves London about six and may return in the small hours of next morning. "Every play is preceded by five weeks of rehearsals, so it's pretty hard going," says McCarthy.

The ability cheerfully to accept the knockabout of playing in pubs is what he looks for in new members. "The great thing is whether they will fit into the company. Everyone comes in on the same terms, undertaking to attend all rehearsals and performances and to play as cast. There is no star system and no jealousy. We want a real interest in the theatre and not just a desire to be seen on a stage."

Though the licensing laws allow anyone over fourteen to appear in a pub, McCarthy insists on a lower age limit of eighteen—"to be on the safe side" in case they are offered drinks. Most are between twenty and thirty, though Reginald Ridge, one of the old hands drafted into Festival companies as "stiffeners," recently celebrated his thirty-fifth birthday on tour. One of the

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EX. ..... 6d.

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youngest Taverners is eighteen-year-old Angela Phipps, who hopes to enter the professional theatre by way of R.A.D.A. She hopes that Taverning will be as useful an experience to her as it was to two former members, one of whom is now appearing in the West End, the other in a provincial repertory company.

Most Taverners come in for the fun of it, having acquired an interest in amateur theatre at school or in a works society. Their professions include tailor, draftsman, civil servant, housewife, commercial artist, solicitor and aeronautical engineer. McCarthy claims he can spot the trouble-maker a mile away, but when one does get into the company, he is allowed to finish his tour. His card is then taken out of the file and lost. "We never make bad friends," says McCarthy.

Casting Off Restraint

Although the repertoire contains many plays familiar to amateur actors, McCarthy often finds that new members are too restrained. "Our style is bigger and broader; we need more attack. You can still get the subtleties if you know how. Our performances vary according to the pub. For that reason, we never allow a company to reach the final stages of rehearsal—that makes it easier for them to adapt themselves."

Many people in England have not even heard of the Taverners, but the company is already arousing interest all over the world. A programme about them recently went out over the Columbia radio network of the United States and McCarthy frequently gets inquiries from an American travel agency on behalf of tourists who want to see the Taverners perform. Press cuttings come in regularly from Australia and South Africa and a notice recently appeared in the *Jerusalem Post*. The Taverners have appeared in newsreels, sound radio, television and a feature film on pubs.

Nowadays, McCarthy has a stream of inquiries from landlords who want the Taverners to appear in their pubs. Where possible, a house is fitted provisionally into the rota and if it proves suitable may later be given a permanent place. "We're now reaching saturation point," says McCarthy. Next year he may have four companies.

Though licensees look on the Taverners as an added amenity for their patrons, they also find that a show—especially at the beginning of the week—gives a welcome boost to beer sales. The landlord of a house in Kent reckoned he took twelve pounds more than usual the night the Taverners played in his saloon bar.

Suspicion Of "Culture"

In areas where the Taverners are unknown, however, the landlords are sometimes suspicious of anything smelling of "culture." When McCarthy approached the licensee of one pub, he refused to take responsibility for a production. "A fortnight ago I had a concert and after ten minutes they wrecked it," he said. A few days later, after a chat with the owners, McCarthy saw him again: "If you let me put the play on, you're absolved from all liability."

"Only if you give me a letter of indemnity," insisted the landlord. This McCarthy did and a few days later put on Sheridan's *The Scheming Lieutenant*. "They were as good as gold," he says, "and loved every minute of it. But when I went to see the landlord afterwards, I found him locked in his office." THE END

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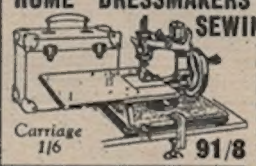

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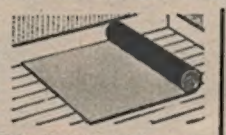

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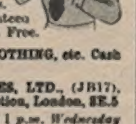

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